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PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY
AND ITS CORRUPTIONS.

VOL. III.

DEPARTMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN HOPEDALE, MASS.,

A. D. 1871-72,

BY ADIN BALLOU.

EDITED BY WILLIAM S. HEYWOOD.

"For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."—*1 Pet. ii. 25.*

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."—*John x. 27.*

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority."—*Titus ii. 14, 15.*

LOWELL, MASS.:

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1900.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This Volume is the third and concluding one of the series projected by the author and prepared in part for publication some years before his decease. Like those already issued, it is composed of certain Discourses written and delivered in the usual order of Sunday service, while he was Minister of an independent Religious Society in Hopedale, Mass., his place of residence for nearly fifty years. In its completed form the work may be regarded as embodying his mature and undoubted convictions touching the great questions of truth and duty which engaged his attention and taxed his energies during the greater portion of his long and active life; as his last contribution to the religious literature of the world; his legacy to inquiring and progressive minds in generations that were to come when he should have passed beyond the scenes of earth and time. It is the fruit of a definite and disinterested purpose on the part of the writer to serve his Maker and his fellow-men in some substantial, enduring way—a purpose which dominated his whole being and which gave meaning, dignity, and worth to his character and career.

The three volumes which make up the series, all bearing the common title of "PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CORRUPTIONS," follow each other in the natural and logical order of succession. The first, under the sub-title of "THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINES," treating of the Divine Order of the world and universe and the Moral Government under which all rational and responsible beings therein exist, constitutes the foundation upon which the theory and practice set forth in the subsequent ones rest. The second, devoted to that

department of the common subject denominated "PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS," is designed to portray and illustrate the quality of character and order of life in the individual which are generated and required by the ethical principles and spiritual forces the first essays to disclose, elucidate, and commend. The third, pursuing the same line of thought and carrying the same method of procedure out to larger issues and to more comprehensive results, endeavors to delineate, under the head of "ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY," the true nature, purpose, and work of the Christian Church, as indicated in the life, teachings, and example of its Founder; its purpose and work being, not simply to formulate, maintain, and promulgate a given system of faith or scheme of doctrine through the agency of carefully devised and appropriate institutions, ordinances, and ceremonial observances, but to make that faith or doctrine conduce to the renovation of personal character, to the extension of the realm of human brotherhood, to the right ordering of the conduct of men in all their relations to each other, to the reconstruction of society and the modeling it after the Christian ideal, and to the building up, in righteousness, love, peace, and joy, of a heavenly kingdom on the earth.

The special object or design of these volumes cannot be easily misunderstood. It is to restore the long-lost simplicity and purity of the religion of Jesus Christ to the thoughts and hearts of men; to lead the lovers of truth and good back from the errors with which ignorance, superstition and barbarism had obscured the person, the teachings, and the mission of Jesus to the real man of Nazareth, as he was when he went about Galilee and Judea doing good; healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and turning men from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is to portray him, not as he has been represented for fifteen hundred years by theologians, dogmatists, and creed-makers, but as he actually appeared to those who gathered about him when he was upon the earth, listening to his words, and catching the contagion of his pure and disinterested life; to affirm and empha-

size the practicability of his principles and spirit in all human concerns, under all possible circumstances; and to urge the duty and importance of applying those principles and that spirit to the thought, feeling, and conduct of men in all the affairs and relations of life. In this regard the author was but anticipating if not helping to put in motion the obvious trend of the religious world in these later days, of all Christian denominations whatsoever name they bear—the trend away from the medieval or traditionary conception of Christianity to that which, according to the most trustworthy records, obtained among the primitive disciples and evangelists; away from a scholastic, speculative faith to a practical, living one; one that shall renew, uplift, and perfect the hearts and lives of individual men, establish a divine order of human society upon the earth, and redeem the whole world of human kind.

That this trend actually exists and has become a marked feature of modern church life is most manifest and unquestionable; one of the encouraging signs of the times. It has already wrought a notable change for the better in a multitude of particulars since the Discourses which appear in this work were written. Old-time creeds have been greatly modified or are superseded by more modern and better ones. Belief, as a test of Christian discipleship or basis of fellowship, is giving way to character and Christlikeness. The suspicions and animosities that formerly embittered the relations of different denominations are dying out, and mutual respect, confidence, and co-operation are taking their place. The humanities are rising to prominence in the church at large; to lift the burdens and remove the disabilities that multiply the sorrows of mankind are getting to be therein a prominent interest and concern. The evils of existing industrial and social systems are recognized as never before, and as never before are professing Christians of all faiths casting about for ways and means of remedying them. Earnest and devout men and women on all hands are discussing social problems and seeking methods of bettering the relations of different classes of people to each other, and of

developing a more humane, fraternal, and Christian type of civilization. Many theological schools and other seminaries of learning are establishing Lectureships or Chairs of Sociology, under the growing conviction that there are radical defects and immoralities existing in the present order of human life, in its larger and more comprehensive aspects; and the more high-minded and Christlike of publicists and statesmen are counseling, as in no other period of history, mutual amity between the nations, arbitration instead of an appeal to the sword for the settlement of disagreements and grievances, peace and not war as the standing policy of states and empires throughout the world. The Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood are coming to be regarded not as merely sentimental abstractions, glittering generalities, iridescent dreams, but as practical truths, inspiring and transforming ideals, the watchwords wherewith to stir the hearts and arouse the zeal of men to the sublime task of building up here and now the kingdom of God. True followers of Christ, all lovers of their kind, may well rejoice that these things are so, and give thanks therefor to the Author of all good; and since these things are so, it is more than probable that, had the Discourses contained in the present and two preceding volumes been written by the same hand twenty-five years later than they were, many of the strictures in them upon the nominal church and much of the censure applied to it for its infidelity to the principles and spirit of the primitive Gospel, would have been considerably modified, if not omitted altogether.

And yet it is by no means certain that those strictures and the accompanying censure are not even now in order, and to a considerable extent needful as a testimony to "the truth as it is in Jesus," and to the life, individual and social, which his religion delineates and requires. For notwithstanding all that has been done in the direction indicated — notwithstanding the progress that has been made along the lines which this volume pursues, the church is still in important respects far from the ideal herein set forth, far from that state of moral and spiritual pre-eminence which qualifies it to be a

trustworthy guide to the highest and best things—a sure leader of the race forward by the way of a transformed and reorganized humanity to the promised millennium of universal righteousness, brotherhood, and peace. Instead of standing firmly and uncompromisingly for the eternal realities, and for the application of divine moral principles to all the relations and concerns of men, testifying unhesitatingly against prevailing selfishness, greed of gain, lust of power, militarism, and kindred immoralities and abominations, it is often a caterer to them, an excuser of them, a suppliant for favor at their hands; a bond-servant of existing civilization, a retainer of worldly government, a subaltern of the state, to do its bidding and to sanction and sanctify its undertakings, however unjustifiable they may be, regardless of the spirit and requirement of Christ or of any divine authority or right of governance in heaven or on the earth. This pusillanimous subserviency to the powers that be, this treachery to the Master it professes to serve, on the part of the church at large was strikingly illustrated in its action respecting the late war between the United States and Spain, and its deplorable and inglorious sequel, the invasion of the Philippines. While the war-spirit was kindling into life throughout the country by the clamor of the worst elements in the political arena and the frenzied utterances of a depraved portion of the public press; and when the portents of open hostilities, involving incalculable cruelty, bloodshed, and death, with the sorrow and distress attendant thereon, were filling the national sky, the church, in its various branches and through its representatives, protested most vigorously against the threatening conflict as a most appalling calamity, opposed to the humanitarian spirit of the age, repugnant to the better sentiments of the human heart, and hostile to the beneficent and peaceful genius of the Gospel of Christ. But no sooner was war declared than these protests were hushed to silence, and the voice of the churchman chimed in with those of the politician, the purveyor of a debased press, and the lover of strife and carnage, justifying, encouraging, and urging on the bloody, fratricidal strife. And with a few praiseworthy

exceptions the church through its varied instrumentalities has joined heartily with the world in prosecuting the work of human slaughter, either by active participation therein or by giving it willing support, or it has crowned that work with the laurel of its approbation and sanctified it with commendatory prayer and pious song. As if an act of Congress or the proclamation of a President could convert an awful calamity into a blessing, make a great wrong right, or render the angelic song of "Peace on earth good will to men," and the holiest teachings of the Savior of the world, of no more practical account, and no more worthy of regard in the intercourse and conduct of nations, than the mutterings of a senseless enthusiast or the chattering of foxes in the forest wilds. As a matter of fact, there have been in the closing years of the nineteenth century, no more supple, obsequious, enthusiastic worshipers of the sanguinary war-god than many who dwell in the bosom of the church, than some who stand before the world as its champions and functionaries.

Such being the case the publication of the present volume at the present time seems opportune and needful; and its demand for a regenerate church, fashioned after the pattern given us in the New Testament and embodying in some large measure the spirit of love to God and man, to be amply illustrated in character and life, is as reasonable and fitting as it is Christian. As there is an infinitely Perfect One who doeth His will among the inhabitants of earth as well as amid the armies of heaven, who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the folly of man to serve His cause and kingdom, and who will raise up laborers to work in His vineyard and carry His purpose in the creation of the world and of those dwelling in it to a complete fulfillment, so shall He, in His all-wise Providence and by the operation of His Holy Spirit, some day cause a radical transformation to take place in the church that now is, or create a new one characterized by higher principles, having a more excellent ministry, established upon better promises; a church that will exalt to supremacy the standard of righteousness, brotherhood, peace, and love, and under that standard go forth con-

quering and to conquer, till the victory shall be won and the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. To promote this grand result was this volume planned and written, and for the accomplishment of this purpose is it now sent forth into the world. May the Great Disposer of all events, the Eternal Helper of all beneficent and redemptive undertakings, speed its mission and make it conducive to the enduring welfare and happiness of mankind and to the honor of His ever-blessed name.

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PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CORRUPTIONS.

DEPARTMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

DISCOURSE I.

CHRIST THE FOUNDER OF A DISTINCTIVE CHURCH.

"On this rock will I build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." — *Matt.* xvi. 18.

"Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it; * * * That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." — *Eph.* v. 25, 27.

"The Churches of Christ salute you." — *Rom.* xvi. 16.

In the first volume of the series constituting my complete work upon PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CORRUPTIONS I treated of the *Theology* taught by Jesus Christ and his early Apostles according to the New Testament Scriptures, as distinguishable from those misinterpretations and perversions of it which, soon after their day, came in to supplant or at least vitiate its most essential characteristics and seriously weaken its power of moral and spiritual

enlightenment, uplifting, and redemption among men. In the second, I discharged a similar duty in respect to what I termed the *Personal Righteousness* of the original Christian Gospel; or, in other words, its ethical significance and claims, as far as regards those who profess to believe and practice it.

And now in the third and last one bearing the same general title I purpose to pursue the same course with reference to what I denominate the *Ecclesiastical Polity* of pure Christianity; by which, I mean, its teaching and requirement concerning the formation, administration, and executive functions of the so-called Church of Christ. And by the phrase, Church of Christ, I would be understood as indicating that company, assemblage, or body of persons, more or less closely affiliated and organized, who, in any place or time and under whatever name, acknowledge in some specific way a common faith in and allegiance to Christ as a moral and spiritual teacher, guide, and Saviour, and who are united to each other in the bonds of a recognized sympathy, fellowship, and brotherhood. In its larger sense, the phrase may include, at any period of human history, the entire hierarchy of Christendom—all those the wide world over, who, as disciples of Christ and in his name and by the promptings of his spirit of love to God and man, are seeking by organic methods and established institutions to illustrate the principles and precepts of his religion in their own characters and lives, and to extend as far and wide as possible their influence and power in the world.

And so, too, what I call the Ecclesiastical Polity of Christianity may be regarded as including in its more comprehensive significance and final purpose, not simply the regulation and orderly control of what are usually designated sacred interests and concerns but secular also,—all possible human interests and concerns in all the relations and circumstances of life. And this present series of discourses might be deemed, what in large measure I intend it shall be, an Exposition of Christian Sociology; or a treatise upon the obligation and duty of all who bear the Christian name and who are associated for Christian work, to make the spirit and principles of the religion they profess and glorify conduce, through the agency of the church and its instituted activities, not only to the renovation and perfection of individual character, but to the evolution and achievement of a divine order of human society. Christianity, as I view it, is not in any proper estimate of its merits, claims, and capabilities, a partial, fragmentary, one-sided religion, but all-sided, all-comprehensive, universal. And the church of Christ, true to its divine purpose and to the design of its founder, contemplates and involves, in the grand sweep of its inherent possibility and in its ultimate development, nothing less than the actualization of the ideal social state—the establishment as an accomplished fact of the kingdom of God on the earth. All this I hope to be able to show conclusively to the intelligent and candid reader on the pages of the present volume.

Before entering specifically upon the task thus indicated, however, and as a fitting introduction to it, I deem it desirable, if not necessary to a clear understanding of the matter under examination, to inquire whether or not Christ himself did in reality or virtually found a church,—whether or not, he to all practical intents and purposes, caused to be brought together in a common fellowship, union, or brotherhood, a company of men and women believing in him, acknowledging his claims, and devoting themselves to the faith and life which he inculcated; who in their associated capacity were in any proper sense worthy to be considered *a church*, a distinctive body of disciples fitted and authorized to represent him and to carry forward his work in the world. The vast majority of his professed followers have never doubted this, but a few extreme Protestants and radical thinkers have not only doubted but denied it. Such have usually contended that there is one universal spirito-moral church, comprising all the Christlike or truly good on earth and in heaven; that Jesus recognized this mystical, unorganized company of saintly ones as his real church and neither instituted nor authorized others to institute any definite, specified body or community of disciples to be known by his name separate from general human society or the world at large. Some excellent people—reformers and moralists—who revolt from ecclesiastical organizations on account of their imperfections and abuses, alleging that they are inherently mischievous and restrictive of personal liberty, and tend natu-

rally to arbitrary and despotic rule, lean radically to that conclusion. But I cannot agree with them. I do not object to the idea of an inorganic, universal church, united by spiritual ties alone, in its proper sense and place. I rather believe in it. Nevertheless, I insist upon the fact of a distinctive association of Christian believers—a community of disciples—separated from the Jewish ecclesiasticism and from all classes of then existing people—founded by the Master; in the world but not of it. And I furthermore believe that such a body or community, properly called a church, was necessary to the permanent establishment of Christianity among men and its progress in subsequent ages and final triumph throughout the earth.

But in saying that Jesus of Nazareth was the founder of such a church, I do not intend to be understood as affirming that he formally organized it and devised a set of machinery for its management, after the prevailing modern fashion; drawing up a constitution and by-laws, securing signatures to the same, having officers elected for the discharge of certain specified duties and putting things in motion in an arbitrary, mechanical way; but rather that he declared the principles which underlie the church, awakened in human souls the spirit which brings them together in a true fellowship, set before men and women objects so worthy of their ambition and noblest effort as to impel them to stand by each other and work together for their own mutual growth in the divine life, for the extension of the Gospel far and wide as possible, and

for the salvation of humanity. In this sense, and to this extent, it is as true and as reasonable to regard Christ as the founder of the church that is known by his name as it is to call George Fox the founder of the Society of Friends, or to say that John Harvard was the founder of the ancient University at Cambridge. He brought together and moulded the material of which it was first composed, he taught the inspiring truths which gave it life, he imparted to it the spirit of love to God and man which was its distinguishing characteristic, he set in motion the activities which made its existence possible and which clothed it with mighty power as a redemptive agency in the world of man according to the plan of God. Its more formal and complete organization, its more specific methods of operation, its more adequate equipment for its heaven-commissioned work in the years and ages ahead were left to the care of the Apostles, whom he appointed to represent him and his cause, to preach his Gospel, and to advance the interests of his kingdom after he should pass away from earth, and to that eternal divine Providence which has all fortunes and destinies in its keeping and which evermore sees to it that agencies and instrumentalities shall never be wanting for carrying forward the great work of human regeneration, and for fulfilling to the utmost the grandly beneficent purpose of the Infinite One.

It is the special purpose of the present discourse to show that Jesus Christ was himself the projector and founder of the Christian Church, even as he

was said to have been the author and finisher of our Christian faith. This I shall endeavor to do, partly by rational and fair-minded inference and partly by more direct and well-authenticated testimony, presenting my argument in the form of several definite propositions which I will state and discuss in their proper order respectively.

I. The constitution of human nature rendered it necessary for Jesus to establish a church—that is, to bring his disciples together in a more or less closely related body, separate from the world at large—in order to the successful prosecution of the work that he felt to be given him of God to do while in the flesh.

Christianity, whether regarded as a theory of divine living on the part of individuals and in all possible social relations, or as a great providential movement in human history, has a basis in the constitution of man, and in its practical aspects and bearings must have been built up on that constitution and in accordance with its inherent impulses and demands, or it would have come at an early day to disastrous and irretrievable failure. No philosopher ever lived who understood this better than Jesus himself, as was clearly shown in the immediately preceding volume. And no one ever labored in any department of the field of human culture and improvement who kept that fact more distinctively in mind, and acted more consistently in respect to it than did Jesus, during the entire period of his earthly ministry. He took human nature as it is in its inherent capacities and

possibilities, and therefrom sought to evolve by the co-operative aid of the Holy Spirit an individual and social life in harmony with the all-perfect life of God. He took that same human nature and marshalled its indwelling forces into his service as agencies for the diffusion of his Gospel and the promotion of his kingdom in the world.

Among those forces recognized and employed by him was the social instinct, or element, a constituent part of the being of man. Human nature is intrinsically social as well as individual. Its individuality, giving self-poise and dignity no less than variety to character and to life, is not to be ignored, destroyed, or impaired. The same is true of its sociality. Absolute, personal independence is an impossibility among men. The perfection of the individual isolated from the great brotherhood of humanity is a delusion and a snare. It was a divine utterance, howsoever spoken, which declared that "it is not good for man to be alone." Therefore God created the race male and female. Therefore "He set the solitary in families." Therefore, under His providential rule, men have been correlated and grouped according to some definite, although, mayhap, inapprehensible law of association and affiliation, into neighborhoods, communities, municipalities, provinces, states, and nations.

"Heaven forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all."

No one person possesses the full complement of human capabilities in full exercise and development. All need the sympathy, help, support of their fellow-beings, and there is no absolute good of one separate from the universal good. The native-born instincts, affections, longings of the mind and heart of man, prompt to companionship, co-operation, unity. And this is especially so when, under the inspiration of a common faith, hope, and love, a truly great, good, glorious work is to be accomplished, a sublime mission to be carried forward to its fulfillment. Christ was not ignorant of these obvious facts. His entire ministry proves that "he knew what was in man," and that he was watchful and eager to employ the inborn human energies which he found awaiting the summons to noble and holy activity for the furtherance of his beneficent work. And it is not reasonable to suppose that he overlooked or neglected in his search for ways and means of action, the social attributes of man's nature — among the most central, commanding, and efficient forces dwelling therein. There are good grounds therefore for believing that Jesus not only assented to and approved the grouping of his early followers together in his name as a testimonial of their allegiance to him, and for the advancement of his cause, but that he counseled, encouraged, and aided them in their course — that they acted in this, as in so many other respects, under his more or less open and formal guidance and leadership. Moreover,

The religious sentiments, faculties, capabilities of mankind are pre-eminently social in their nature, and when called into vigorous activity, tend spontaneously and inevitably to unity, friendliness, reciprocity of thought and conduct, mutual helpfulness, fraternization, in practical life.

This is fully demonstrated in the experience and history of men under all forms of faith, in all ages of the world. Wherever we find the votaries of any assumed object of worship, real or imagined; the believers in any creed, true or false; the followers of any prophet, as man of God or a pretender; there we find also associated activity, for purposes of personal advantage or of ecclesiastical support and propagandism. Where vital religious sentiment exists, there are churches, sects, denominations, hierarchies, in multifarious form; of more or less closely related unitary life. This is not simply natural, it is indispensable to healthful existence and to ultimate success. When linked with sincerity of purpose, fidelity to principle, and a desire to benefit and bless mankind, it is highly commendable. For deep religious convictions and a profoundly religious spirit draw people together, awaken a feeling of brotherhood, combine forces and agencies for effective service, and so strengthen the common cause and promote the universal good. Jesus therefore, by addressing the religious nature of those about him, by arousing their spiritual energies, by calling them from self and sin to the worship and service of God in the way of duty and of sacrifice, virtually summoned them to and prepared

them for the formation of that society of believers which was afterwards to be called *the Church*, and which was to be known by his name to the remotest generations. He put them upon a course of thought and conduct, the legitimate and inevitable result of which, in the very nature of things, was a distinctive body of people confessing allegiance to him as Lord and Master, bound to each other by the ties of a common faith and of spiritual harmony, and representing before the world both him and the cause with which he was in life and in death indissolubly identified.

2. The divinely appointed mission and distinctive righteousness of Jesus Christ required a church as an agency for maintaining their claims to the veneration and love of mankind, and for perpetuating their influence and power of good unto coming generations and ages.

The mission of Christ was not simply, as seems to have been supposed by the great majority of those who have professed to be his followers in bygone days, to save the souls of men from the consequences of sin and evil in the eternal world—in a future state of being; but to save them from the miseries incident to sin and evil in this present world, and with regard, not to the soul alone, but to both soul and body. This is evident alike from his precepts and from his example. To the intelligent reader of the New Testament the quoting of texts and passages portraying what he said and did in proof of this view would be superfluous. Furthermore, that mission had respect also to the asso-

ciated relations of men as well as to their strictly personal affairs; to human society no less than to individual conduct and character. And the righteousness he inculcated was correspondingly comprehensive, all-embracing, universal. It was to be applied to all possible human concerns, and illustrated in all possible human activities, public as well as private, social as well as individual, national and international as well as personal.

It was important therefore, not to say indispensable, in order to duly and effectually set forth the larger aspects of the purpose of Christ's mission, that his true disciples should separate themselves from the existing social order, which was characterized by tyranny, fraud, corruption, hatred, wrath, and war, and form, by and of themselves, an association or community free from all demoralizing alliances, co-partnerships, and responsibilities, becoming thus the nucleus and illustrative example of a new social order, based upon the principles of the Gospel of their Lord and animated by the spirit of love to God and man. And this course of conduct was no less important and indispensable when considered in respect to the distinctive righteousness of pure Christianity, which in any true view of it demands the same stern, uncompromising application of the principles of virtue and uprightness to the social conduct of men, to the policies and practices of communities, states, and nations, and the same exemplification of the spirit of love and brotherhood that is enjoined upon men and women in their personal characters and in the utmost

recesses of their private lives. The real doctrine of Christ regarding this matter is that the commandments of the Most High are binding alike upon all men in all life's relations; that what is absolutely wrong for one person to do by him or herself, is wrong for any number of persons to do, in any form of association and by whatsoever name designated; that individual and social morality is one and the same, in all lands and among all nations, unto the end of time.

And my contention is that Christ, being engaged in a mission which involved a regeneration of the social life of men as well as of their personal character, and teaching a righteousness which was obligatory upon his disciples in all their public relations and interests no less than in their private conduct and character, must, as a necessity, have contemplated and provided for the establishment of a church — a body of believers in him who should be able to illustrate among themselves and in their relations to each other the excellences and graces enjoined upon them by their holy religion; who should be in the midst of a wicked, an adulterous generation, and in a selfish, sensual, oppressive, war-engendering, man-slaughtering world, what the Apostle says they were, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; who should show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in time past were not a people but are now the people of God." Thus separated from the prevailing evils of their time and from the corrupt,

unchristian practices, customs, and policies of the existing church and state, they were morally and spiritually considered "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth," as the Master called them; "the little flock" of faithful ones to whom "it was the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom."

3. The moral progress and ultimate happy destiny of mankind on the earth, as foretold by the prophets and seers of then past times, and as the God-designed result of Christ's mission, made the existence of a church an indispensable necessity.

In the sublime economy of the universe as planned and directed by the Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Love, it is provided beyond all peradventure, in my judgment, not only that the human race as a whole shall attain a state of final holiness and happiness in the world to come, but that the portion of it dwelling in this world shall at length become thoroughly regenerated and Christianized, in fulfillment of the ancient saying of the Hebrew seer that "All shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest," and of the prayer taught by the Master, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Inasmuch as such a grand issue is fore-ordained of God from the foundation of the world, and inasmuch as it is not to be secured by any super-mundane, miraculous agency operating independently of human will or effort, but according to those laws of orderly, moral, and spiritual nurture and growth under which human and divine forces interblend and co-operate for the promotion of the end in view, it

was absolutely necessary that methods and measures should be instituted by those engaged in the work adequate to its successful prosecution and ultimate achievement. Not only must personal character be renovated and ennobled, becoming thereby a power of good in the community and world, but social life must be reconstructed and made to conform to high ideals; "a more excellent way" for men to live together as children of one Father in Heaven must be shown as an illustration of what ought to be in the manifold relations of men to each other, and as a sample, also, of what some day would be among all classes of people to the ends of the earth — the way of love, harmony, brotherhood, peace. And this work of social reconstruction was begun under the inspiration of Christ's teaching and example by the early disciples in the formation of the church; this "more excellent way" was exhibited by the little company or companies of those who in his day accepted his Gospel, and, being animated by his spirit, abandoned the customs and practices of existing society in its ecclesiastical and political aspects, and entered into a new fellowship based upon diviner principles and illustrative of a higher civilization than had ever existed before.

The necessity of such action must be apparent to every thoughtful mind. The faith and constancy of believers depended upon it; nay, the very existence of Christianity itself. But for the powerful moral influence of the church; but for the strong bonds that by association with kindred minds and hearts held them to their better purposes and

resolves, the mass of those early believers would have been swept away and lost forever to the cause of Christ by the corrupted currents of the world's tumultuous life; would have been swallowed up by the mighty maelstrom of selfish greed, of carnal indulgence, of worldly ambition, of bloody strife, which then engulfed the masses of mankind. But for the church, which, in the providence of God, preserved the traditions and the testimonies of the great Teacher, which kept alive the story of His wondrous works and transmitted the knowledge of them to coming generations, all that Jesus said and did would have died away upon the airs of time and perished from the memory of the race. Christianity obtained a sure foothold as a new revelation of God to men, it survived the dark days that followed the crucifixion of him who gave it being, it became a great, on-going, ever-swelling movement in human history, because the church was founded in Christ's own day, as a result of his labors, as a fruit of his spirit, as a conservator of the Gospel of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man. The new wine of the divine kingdom was put into the new bottles of a regenerate, Christianized church, and was thus preserved.

4. The fulfillment of the profounder hopes and aspirations of a human heart in the earlier ages of the world, in the most inspired teachings of the ancient Jewish people, was largely if not wholly dependent upon the founding of a church on the part of him by whose agency the foreshadowed result was to be accomplished.

Thus Moses is reputed to have said, "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren; unto him shalt thou hearken." — *Deut.* xviii. 15. And Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born, a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." — *Isa.* ix. 6, 7. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles." "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law." — *Isa.* xlii. 1, 4. And yet another, "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven; * * * And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." — *Daniel* vii. 13, 14.

Now whatever theory we may adopt in regard to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, or whatever view we may hold concerning the direct application of the passages quoted to the person

and mission of Christ, it cannot, I think, be doubted that they were the formulated utterances of those instinctive desires and aspirations which God had implanted deep in the heart of humanity in the beginning and may reasonably be deemed divine auguries of some future good and glory for the race—of some deliverer, Messiah, Saviour yet to come, who should bring redemption to Israel. Jesus did not refrain from applying them to himself and of considering them indicative of his mission; whether in a literal or in a spiritual sense does not affect materially the use I now make of them. That they have a place and a meaning in the divine order of the world, I have no doubt, as I have none that they are rich in promise for the generations and ages that were to be when they first found expression in human speech and took their place in the annals of the world. And my plea is, that, as such, the blessings that they foretell, so far as they were to be the outcome of the advent and life-work of Jesus of Nazareth, could not possibly have been shared and enjoyed to any marked degree except through the agency of the Christian society or church. This makes such society or church an indispensable adjunct or outcome of Christianity itself, a legitimate product of the work of Christ.

5. The New Testament records are replete with passages which imply if they do not positively declare that Christ regarded himself and was regarded as virtually the designer and founder of the church with which his name was and has always been identified. My text is one of these.

"On this rock will I build my church," etc., and again, "I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."—*John* x. 14, 16. As a final act of discipline in the case of an offending disciple he said; "Tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church let him be as a heathen man and a publican."—*Matt.* xviii. 17.

When the great outpouring of the Spirit occurred on the day of Pentecost, soon after the passing away of Jesus from the earth, and multitudes were converted thereby under the preaching of Peter, it is written that "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—*Acts* ii. 47. "Ye are the body of Christ," said Paul, "and members in particular."—*1 Cor.* xii. 27. "Christ is the head of the church."—*Eph.* v. 23. "He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church."—*Col.* i. 18.

From these and kindred passages found in the Gospel and Epistles it seems to me evident that Christ deemed himself in some proper and distinctive sense the architect and builder of that religious order or associated group of men and women who owned a common allegiance to him, who were glad to confess that their highest, truest, best life was derived from him, and who felt bound to him by the most tender and sacred of ties—those of spiritual sympathy and fellowship; an order or group known even at an early day as his

church. And furthermore it seems evident that the Apostles, without any hesitation or question, regarded him in the same light; as standing in the same relation to themselves and their fellow-believers that the head in any living organism does to the various members and functions which make of that organism, a living, perfect whole. "For as the body is one and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."—1 *Cor.* xii. 12, 13, 27.

In my next I will enter upon an exposition of the intrinsic nature and constitutional character of Christ's true church.

DISCOURSE II.

THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

"Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain."—*John* xv. 16.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."—*Ephs.* ii. 19, 20, 21.

Having in the preceding discourse established the fact, as I think, that Christ was himself the virtual founder of the church bearing his name, the next inquiry that naturally suggests itself to the truth-seeking mind relates to the distinctive, inherent nature of that church, as he formed and fashioned it, and started it out on its beneficent and saving mission in the world. Accepting the general lines of reasoning and the conclusion deducible therefrom referred to, we may confidently assume at the outset that he could not have given existence and character to an institution or association in any wise inconsistent with or unworthy of his own office, principles, spirit, and supreme object in life; in any degree beneath the lofty plane of personal

and social righteousness enjoined by his own precepts and illustrated by his own example;—an institution or association not pre-eminently superior in intrinsic moral excellence and religiously uplifting power to the Jewish church in which he and his immediate followers had been sedulously trained, and to the existing social and political order into which they had been born. It must have been a transcendently-designed and anomalous church, characterized by several differentiating features.

I. It was both a divine and a human church; that is, a church in which both divine and human elements were blended in evenly balanced and harmonious proportions. In respect to its origin, its essential qualities, its vital spirit, its ultimate ideal, it was divine, perfect, immutable. But in respect to its membership, its external expression or organic form, its administration, its actual moral and spiritual attainment, it was human, imperfect, changeable.

II. Its proper, God-designed plane or sphere of being and action was morally above, separate from, and independent of all human associations whatsoever; yet hostile to no truth or good in any of them and contending against their follies, errors, evils by no other than beneficent and uninjurious agencies, without wrong or harm to any human being. In regard to worldly, sword-sustained governments, claiming authority and exercising arrogated power over its members, peaceable submission was enjoined upon all concerned, even to the extent of personal suffering and martyrdom, regarding such governments as in some rightful sense ordained of God

for the general good of communities, states, and nations; and, in their aggregate, of all mankind.

III. It was a purely voluntary association under the leadership of Christ. Its members came together originally of their own free will, and could remain or withdraw as they might choose. In the exercise of the same liberty were new members received and discharged. At the same time the body was empowered to extend its fellowship to those wishing to enter it or to withdraw or withhold it for reasons deemed sufficient. Questions of duty or policy were determined by general voice or consent obtained without compulsion or restraint, and no dernier resort to violence or death-dealing force was allowable.

IV. It was a self-providing, self-subsisting, self-governing, self-protecting body in respect to all the real necessities of its own members and their legitimate dependents; none of these being left to the providence, charity, or humanity of the outside world or of any of its eleemosynary institutions for the supply of anything essential to the welfare of body, mind, or spirit, individually or associatively,—absolute impossibilities alone excepted.

V. It demanded the heartfelt allegiance, devotion, and fidelity of its adherents, first to Christ himself as their great head, and then to each other as fellow-members of his body; and also their separate and united endeavor to preserve, sustain, promote, and honor itself by all righteous means and at all hazards of personal cost and sacrifice, in preference to any other association, institution, rela-

tionship, or interest of human device and appointment.

Having thus stated the five distinguishing peculiarities of the primitive church of Christ I now propose to amplify and illustrate them in their order respectively. I will devote the remainder of the present Discourse to the first one mentioned, whose consideration I commend to the candid attention of my hearers.

I. "It was both a divine and a human church; that is, a church in which both divine and human elements met and were blended in just and harmonious proportions. In respect to its origin, essential qualities, vital spirit, and ultimate ideal, it was divine, perfect, immutable. But in respect to its membership, its external expression or organic form, its administration and actual moral and spiritual character in the aggregate, it was human and therefore imperfect, changeable, and open to criticism and rebuke."

There is a broad distinction between what was divine and what was human in the constitutional nature of the first allied group or company of the Master's followers. I call that divine which is immediately of or from God, inhering in His eternal plan, or proceeding from that unimpeachable order of the universe which He has ordained and set in motion; and that human which is immediately of and from man,—the product of his ingenuity, skill, and handiwork. The former is absolutely good and therefore incapable of improvement or alteration for the better; the latter imper-

fect, defective, pervertible, and convertible, capable of progress towards perfection.

In what respects, then, we may ask, was the primitive Christian church divine?

1. In respect to its origin. God, the Father, in some certain way raised up Christ and empowered him to do a given work in the world. In the prosecution of that work, the church, I repeat, was a necessity and the product of that spirit of wisdom and love which was given him without measure. Moreover, it was an outgrowth and a demand of man's inherent social nature, which is itself marked with the sign-manual of divinity, and which in its inherent instincts and promptings urges on to divine results. It was not, therefore, originally of man's invention or devising, but of that infinite and immutable Presence which, both in and through Christ, and in and through man's intrinsic nature and necessity, conspired and operated to establish and perpetuate it. And as man of himself did not originate the church neither can he or any finite agency destroy it. It is rooted and grounded in God and must endure for the accomplishment of those vast designs for which He gave it a place in the world, and in the divine order of human progress towards infinity.

2. In respect to its absolutely essential qualities and characteristics. We must discriminate between what is essential in the church and what is incidental—between what is inherent and vital to its existence and usefulness, and mere forms, expedients, conveniences, and policies. Without the

former it could not have continued in a healthy state for any appreciable period, or done any substantial enduring good for the human race. That is always and forever the same, partaking of the divine nature, steadfast, immutable, eternal. The latter are conventional, experimental, changeable; subject to modification by time, circumstance, and varying necessity. The church may exist with them or without them; with them under given conditions and without them under other conditions. Indeed, many, if not all of them, may be great helps at one time but great hindrances at another. Like the scaffolding to a building they may aid in the construction of a noble, perfect Christian character at one stage of advancement but be a hindrance at another—an obstacle in the way of further development and a disfigurement of what would be otherwise beautiful and glorious.

What then it may be asked are some of the absolute essentials of the true Christian church—the ideal church of Christ? They may be tabulated under the several heads of Cardinal Objects, Theological Faith, Personal Righteousness, Principles of Social Progress and Order, Established Methods of Organization and Administration. Practically, and as a working basis for church activity as well as for the existence of a church, they are resolvable into truths to be believed and acknowledged, and duties to be performed and fulfilled in character and life. These truths and duties were plainly taught by Christ and enjoined upon his disciples as the basis of all their thought and conduct and as the foundation upon

which they were to build his church. They have come down to us in the New Testament records, and are to be interpreted upon a fair construction for use in our own day and time. As the early believers in Jesus employed them, so are we to do. They are as essential to true church affiliation and co-operation—to the existence and appointed work of a true Christian church now as then. They are divine, they are immutable, they are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And the acceptance of them, confessed faith in them, the acknowledged obligation to live according to them, constitute alike the ground-work of Christian character and the substructure of any Christian institution.

And in declaring for the truths and duties indicated, it will at once be seen that I am not declaring for any of the popular confessions or creeds of the now existing church in any of its differing schools, denominations, sects, under whatsoever partisan name they play their respective parts in the complex drama of the ecclesiastical world. On the other hand, I have no doubt that many, nay, most of these, are radically defective and need a thorough reconstruction in order to have them really Christian—in happy accord with the precepts and principles of the Master. My claim and my contention are for these and these alone as the great, primary, fundamental qualities and characteristics of the Christian church as Jesus formed it and breathed into it the breath of life.

3. In respect to its inmost, vital, animating spirit, the church, as Christ founded it, was divine,

perfect, immutable. We must in the interest of intelligence and a clear understanding, distinguish between the spirit and the letter of the church. "The letter killeth, the Spirit giveth life." Discrimination must also be made between its intrinsic, central, vitalizing spirit and the more external, impulsive, evanescent temper or state of mind that at different times and under different circumstances actuates and characterizes its membership, clergy and laity alike. The latter is often sadly intermingled with, if not over-mastered by, selfish ambition, pride, jealousy, arrogance, and even cruelty and revenge, damaging alike to personal excellence and worth and to the character, standing, and usefulness of the church itself in its organic capacity. The former is pure, sweet, holy, compassionate, forgiving, merciful — the true Christlike spirit, born of the spirit of God and partaking of His essential nature in all its various impulses and manifestations. No doubt much of this spirit entered into the primitive Christian church when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common." "And great grace was upon them all." And I think we may safely conclude that notwithstanding all the imperfections, errors, and abuses that during the passing centuries have crept into, corrupted, and disgraced the nominal church of Christ, it has never wholly lost its original character in this particular, has never been wholly abandoned by the true, the real spirit of

the Master and given over body and soul to the domination of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but has had dwelling somewhere within its fellowship, more or less active, this central divine element which some day will rise once more to supremacy and renew the heart and life of Christendom.

It is this central spirit which has always given the church vitality and kept it alive to this day. Often cramped in its struggles for a freer expression, for a more abounding life, for a larger empire; often partially smothered by unworthy devotees and the arrogance of the outside world, it has yet maintained somewhat of its inherent energy, and found a congenial home in a small but constantly increasing number of those whose hearts have responded to its appeals and given it welcome, and whose lives, transformed and preserved from all evil by its regenerating power, have borne convincing testimony to the divinity whence it sprang and with which it was animated. It is this native, incorruptible, vitalizing force which, still abiding, shall yet slough off the rotten accretions of hypocrisy and deceit, the gross incumbrances of worldly display and material aggrandizement, the barnacles of false doctrine and intolerant assumption that are still over-burdening the nominal Christian church and hindering its progress, and give to it free course in its God-appointed and all-conquering way through the world in the years and ages ahead. Whoever dreams that the church is to die out, or be superseded by some new agency on a different basis and under a different inspiration, or that what

is called civilization, science, art, philosophy, is to elevate mankind and bring in the divine kingdom without its aid—without its inmost quickening spirit, is dreaming in vain. Its influence in the future upon the progress and destiny of humanity will be greater than in the past, and the radiance of its hitherto twilight, dispelling the mists and shadows that have so long obscured its beams, will increase and brighten unto the perfect day. And chiefly because its all-animating spirit is divine and clothed with intrinsic power to overcome all obstacles, impart health and strength to the moral and spiritual capabilities of men, and evolve an order of life upon the earth conformed to the will of the infinite Father of all souls.

4. The church of Christ is divine again in its ideal of spiritual fellowship and of the relation of man to man in all the varied intercourse of life. This ideal of the church, prefiguring its ultimate design and attainment, is one thing; the actual is another, and, as has been, still is, and for a long time will be, quite a different thing. The ideal is what exists in the thought of God as the final result of what he ordains in any given case. In the matter of the church, the ideal is a group, associated body, or community of men and women believing in and submissive to the great principles of truth and righteousness revealed in Jesus Christ and animated by the spirit of love to God and man, drawn to each other and bound together by the cords of a spiritual attraction, sympathy, and compatibility, and exemplifying a reign of holiness, love,

unity, brotherhood, peace. The actual in the matter of the church is what really exists in respect to its membership, organic form, administration, moral status, spiritual life, activity in doing good, service of God and humanity, at any period of its history. The ideal is the archetype, the model, the promise of what will be when the original purpose of God in the existence of the church is accomplished. And that ideal is ever the same. It is the vision of things yet to come, of the great end towards which the church should be evermore striving; it is the pattern fashioned by God's own hand, made known in the Gospel of His dear Son, disclosed to the thought of pure and holy souls, after which the church should be evermore moulding itself, and to the distinctive features of which it should be ever conforming its character and life. As that ideal is made actual by the church, the church exemplifies more and more the true meaning of the Christian religion; when the two become identical, when the ideal becomes the actual, then will God's kingdom have come and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

In what respects, we may now inquire, was the primitive Christian church human?

1. In respect to its membership. In its organic capacity, as a company of the disciples of Christ, the church was composed of human beings, in their very nature and degree of development, imperfect, ignorant in many particulars, liable to error, to folly, and to wrong doing. They had indeed noble endowments, grand capabilities, the germs of virtues

and excellences that could grow and blossom into a perfect character—into Christlikeness and the moral image of the infinite God. But they must needs pass through long processes of education, discipline, and experience, in order to attain their destined perfectness. Entering as pupils in the school of the great Teacher, a few were apt to learn and make rapid progress in the better life to which they were called; more were dull to apprehend moral and spiritual truth and slow to appropriate it to personal use; while too many were carnally-minded and basely inclined, yielding readily to temptation, and the solicitations of evil passions and evil men, and so either falling away through sheer weakness from their professedly high aims, or wilfully apostatizing from the truth as it was in Jesus, and prostituting their transcendent privileges to ignoble, selfish, reprehensible ends. And as it was with the church at the outset in this regard, so has it been in all ages of Christian history, and so to a great extent it is today.

2. In respect to its organization and constructive form. There is no such thing as a divine method of operation for church or state; no such thing as a God-appointed way of accomplishing contemplated ends, so far as concerns outward instrumentalities and appliances. These are strictly human devices, the products of human ingenuity, skill, wisdom, and therefore more or less faulty and inadequate. It was so in the beginning of the Christian regime, is now, and ever will be. Besides, forms of government and means of accomplishment

vary with the varying conditions, circumstances, and historic eras under which they exist. What may serve at one time an important end will prove utterly insufficient at another. And what is well suited to one class of mind or one stage of moral development will be worth nothing to other minds or at other stages of progress. People outgrow forms and organizations, as they outgrow their garments, and must have new ones. What is adapted to an infant church may be wholly useless to an old, long-established one. Existing needs, surrounding circumstances, and numerous considerations of a practical nature must go far to determine what mode of government, what plans of operation shall be instituted at any given period to further most effectually the great objects for which the Christian church was founded.

Much time and labor have been expended during the Christian ages, not infrequently at much loss of the Christian spirit and to the great detriment of the church itself, in discussing whether the Papal or the Episcopal, the Presbyterian or the Congregational forms of church government were scriptural and obligatory or not — whether or not either one of these was to be adopted and maintained at all hazards and against all opposition. Also, as to the propriety and authority of popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, presbyters, councils, and the like. All of which goes to demonstrate how human, how subject to circumstances, to the tastes, the predilections, the fallible opinions, and often the mere whims and passions of men, the church

has ever been in respect to its organization, constructive form, and method of action, in the different departments of its institutional life.

3. The church is emphatically human, moreover, in respect to its administration—in respect to the management of its various offices and functions. As a matter of course those appointed in any period of its history to have charge of its affairs, to serve at its altars, to direct its activities, to execute its purposes in any particular,—its ministers, priests, official servants, of whatsoever order or name, however divinely called, ordained, inspired, or assisted from the unseen world, were, nevertheless, men like their subordinate fellow Christians, clothed with all the attributes of a distinctive personality and power of self-determination, and therefore imperfect in judgment and liable to greater or less mistake. In the discharge of their respective duties, much was left to their own discretion, practical good sense, and moral perceptivity. Human themselves, they were in a human world, working with human materials, amid human difficulties, under everchanging human circumstances; subject to more or less error in consideration of their essential personality they were also subject to great difficulties and trials, as they were in danger of being thwarted in their best aims and efforts; and it is no wonder that their administration of church affairs was more or less open to criticism and even to reprobation, or that the church as an institution, as an active working body in the world, as a hierarchy claiming a divine origin on the one hand, and the respect, con-

fidence, homage, support of right-minded, humane, devout, God-fearing people on the other, should at the same time display its own weakness, imperfection, mutability, capacity for retrogression as well for reformation and progress; in other words, display its own human side in a marked and unmistakable degree.

In these three particulars, to say nothing of less important ones, does the church in all its history show that, whatever may be the extent of the divine element in its essential nature, character, and distinguishing purpose, it has also a purely human element entering into the very blood and fiber of its being and characterizing every department and manifestation of its intrinsic life. Nor is there anything in this humanism of the church which is to its disparagement or which vititates its claims to the confidence, veneration, and love of mankind; anything derogatory to its assumption of indwelling divinity, of being a God-commissioned instrumentality for the edification, regeneration, and perfecting of the race; anything fatal to its final supremacy in the world, or discouraging to those sincerely endeavoring to actualize its divine ideal within its own membership and throughout the earth. But the contrary rather. For if the church were deemed wholly divine, there could be no ground for hope of its improvement, or for effort to carry it forward to perfection; if it were deemed wholly human, with nothing of the divinity in it, the case would be equally hopeless; for it would lack the essential life-principle, the germ from which

all true growth and ultimate attainment of the ideal perfection must spring, and so, would have to be transcended or set aside as of no intrinsic, immutable, imperishable value. But being truly divine in certain regards and as truly human in others, a living faith in and use of the former must, beyond all doubt or peradventure, eventuate in the complete renovation and purification of the latter, so that the great head of the church may at length, as the Apostle says, "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it be holy and without blemish."

In bringing this discourse to a close I am impressed to remark that the ecclesiastics of whatever age who overlooked the distinction of divine and human in the church and regarded it as wholly divine committed an error resulting in most mischievous consequences. Out of it arose naturally the assumption of the infallibility of the church in both its legislative and judicial capacity, and the decrees and verdicts of popes, councils, and other officials became engines of tyranny and persecution, while creeds and dogmas bearing the stamp of authority were invested with such sacredness and claims upon the human conscience that criticism and dissent became deadly heresy and schismatism, to be suppressed and crushed out by force if necessary in order to save the sanctity of the church. Under such circumstances, reform was well-nigh impossible, and abuses and corruptions to a fearful extent came in to degrade the church and paralyze its influence as a redemptive agency in the life of mankind.

On the other hand, scarcely less mischief has been done by those who at any period of Christian history have maintained that the church is in all respects and has ever been only human, with no divine element in it whatsoever. This view of it removes the chief reason for its claims to the respect, confidence, and veneration of men, as it also sets at naught the chief source of its uplifting, regenerating power. If wholly human it must of necessity partake of the folly, imperfection, idiosyncrasy, unreason, and impiety ever found in human nature, and must be at every point and at all times open not simply to criticism and correction but to suspicion and distrust. Under such conditions it could win to its membership and support but few, if any, intelligent, conscientious, devout adherents, and do but little to raise the world to a higher level and bring the better kingdom in.

But in regarding the church as both human and divine, as I have defined and applied those terms, we have not only a rational view of the matter and one justified by a reference to fundamental principles and the facts of the case, but one that gives us a working theory upon which to base all efforts to serve God and man in this department of moral responsibility. The divine gives sanctity, unity, permanence, authority to the church. The human, while accounting for its errors, mistakes, absurdities, abuses, outrages, affords likewise ample scope for variety of opinions and conduct, for flexibility of method, for adaption to constantly changing circumstances and needs, and allows the fullest

exercise of wholesome, individual liberty. The divine furnishes a standard by which the human is to be tried—a test to which all incongruities, mistakes, immoralities, are to be brought and condemned, and also provides the means, the motives, the principles, the spirit, which are inherently capable of working out a reformation and unfolding into something better, and ultimately into the very best; bringing all things at length into complete subordination to and harmony with itself. Thus has the church in itself the promise and potency of its own purification and perfection. Thus shall its falsities, its crudities, its absurdities, its deformities, its corruptions, be sometime swept away, and it shall stand forth undefiled and transcendently glorious; a handmaid of God clothed in the immaculate and beautiful garments of Christlikeness.

DISCOURSE III.

THE MORAL PLANE OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

“Ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world.”—*John* xv. 19.

“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”—1 *Peter* ii. 9.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—*Titus* ii. 14.

These texts indicate the specific theme of the present discourse, which in my last was stated thus, viz :—

2. “Its proper, God-designed plane of being and action (that of the church) is morally above, separate from, and independent of all other human associations whatsoever; yet hostile to no truth or good in any of them and contending against their follies, errors, evils, by no other than beneficent and uninjurious forces, without wrong or harm to any human being. In the case of worldly, sword-sustained governments, claiming supreme authority and exercising arrogant power over its members, peaceable submission is enjoined upon all concerned, even to the extent of personal suffering and martyrdom, under the concession that such

governments are, in some rightful sense, ordained of God for the general good of communities, states, and nations, and, in their aggregate, of all mankind."

Christianity recognizes the existence of two worlds—two distinct states of being;—the material, sensuous, tangible, transitory world—the sphere of time and flesh and sense; and the immaterial, super-sensuous, intangible, immortal world—the sphere of eternal and ever-enduring realities. It teaches that the laws, interests, and concerns of the latter are supreme in the divine economy of the universe, and to be so regarded by its disciples, and that all that pertains to the former are strictly subordinate and to be held subject thereto; the kingdom of God being first and all-important, all beside being secondary and subservient. It insists that what is true, right, and good for man as a denizen of the immortal world is best for him in the mortal sphere as well, and that he should govern himself accordingly. Upon the doctrine thus inculcated Christ founded his church. He declared that his kingdom was not of this world, that he himself was not and that his true disciples likewise were not. "They are not of the world," he said, "even as I am not of the world."

Now what are we to understand by these attestations? What did the Master design to teach by them? Not certainly that his kingdom was not in this present material, mortal sphere, incipiently, at least; not that he was not in it, nor that his disciples were not in it. Of course not. But though

in the world they were not *of* the world. That is, they were not of a worldly, fleshly, sensuous temper or frame of mind, but in their ruling loves, animating desires, and leading aims they were quickened and inspired from the spiritual realm. Whereas the generality of mankind think and act upon what may be termed the material, outward plane of life, Jesus and his true followers dwelt upon a higher, the spiritual and immortal plane. And between these two planes there is a radical moral difference as illustrated in the different characters and careers of those who occupy them and partake of their distinguishing spirit. And we are thus led to consider,—

1. That the proper plane of the pure Christian Church is “morally above, distinct from, and independent of all other human associations whatsoever.” Men being social in their very nature incline to each other, unite in groups or companies clustering around some common center, enter into relations or form organizations for all the various purposes suggested by ambition, interest, or affection, in which any given number of persons feel a common concern. Some of these are small as to numbers and transient as to duration; others are larger and of more permanent existence. Some are purely voluntary, others more or less compulsory. Some proceed directly from the native impulses and demands of the human constitution; others are devices that are gotten up to supply some supposed or real need, or to meet, for the time being, some special demand of business,

or politics, or education, or pleasure, or religion, serving their proper end and then passing away. The more conspicuous and permanent of these affiliated bodies are the family, the neighborhood or primary community, the township, the state, and the confederated nation. All others, good, bad, and indifferent, are implied or represented in these.

Now my affirmation is that the Christian Church as an associate body instituted for the purpose of representing before the world the Primitive Christianity of the Gospel, in its social bearings and aspects quite as much as in its relations to individual thought, feeling, and conduct, was designed to occupy and act upon a social plane morally and religiously higher than that of the family, general society, the state, or the nation; a plane morally distinct from and independent of each and all of these. It was not to take its ethical code *from* or shape its conduct *by* either of these or any other human organization or authority claiming jurisdiction over it. It was to accept no law or dictum of man, whether formulated by legislature or council, whether executed by magistrate or court, whether enforced by penal statute or military power, but only the divine law as expounded by Jesus Christ; the word of the Lord falling from the lips of prophets and seers speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was in no case to lower the divine standard of righteousness, for the sake of conforming to any of these human associations, subserving any of their interests, yielding to any of their demands, compromising with any of their

unchristian requirements, or even averting their hostility and persecution. It was not to be conformed to the world or to any of its instituted activities any farther than they were in harmony with Christ's law of love to God and man, but to be transformed by the renewing of its mind and thus to become itself a transforming power in the midst of the generations unto the end of time. It was not to follow the dictates of worldly policy, of long established custom, of self-constituted authority; it was to lead the world in the way of righteousness and true holiness, in the grand march of progress, in the millennial procession.

Otherwise there was no need of it and it had no distinctive use in the world. It could be only a worldly convenience, a bond-servant of worldly power, an instrument of political engineering or of social respectability, a tool of cunning priestcraft in unholy alliance with worldly statecraft. Alas, that, as a matter of fact, the Christian Church, since the days of Constantine, has been to a large extent thus prostituted. Alas, that even now so many of its professed ministers lean upon the arm of civil government for support, or covet the protection of the civil law with all its pains and penalties in case of attack. Alas, that the great mass of its members know of no higher rule of life than the statutes of the state or nation, which, in given cases, authorize and require the maiming and premeditated slaughter of those whom their confessed Master commands them to love, bless, and pray for—all under pretext of loyalty

to their country and of service to the community at large. All such, notwithstanding their nominal membership in the church of Christ, live and move and have their being morally and socially on the plane of the unregenerate world, and follow Jesus no longer or further than their allegiance to the state or nation permits. When the decrees of the state or nation conflict with the principles of the Gospel they renounce their fealty to those principles, and what adds to the enormity of the offence, pray God, in person or by chosen chaplains, to bless them in doing so—in violating what they profess to believe is God's holy and perfect law. What impiety can be greater than this? Let us now consider

2. That the true Christian Church "is hostile to no truth or good in any other human associations and at the same time contends against their follies, errors, abuses, iniquities, but only by beneficent and uninjurious forces"; the weapons of its warfare being "not carnal but spiritual." There is more or less of truth and good in human governments, for instance. They have their proper place in the divine economy and under God serve important ends. But their place and use is below the plane of the true church. They must not be allowed to overrule and reduce to their own moral level the church; but the church, on the other hand, must labor to purify, elevate, and transfigure them and bring them into accord with its own ideal. That is its mission in its relation to them; not to ignore them but to regenerate them; not to subvert

them but to show them the more excellent way and to make them by moral power and the force of example altogether what they ought to be, reproductions under earthly conditions of the government of God. Approving and commending them in what is right, good, and true in their organic forms and administration, it must in fidelity to its founder and Lord reprove and condemn them in what is wrong, evil, and false, testifying uncompromisingly and contending unremittingly against the same, yet without arrogance and tyranny, without compulsion by violent measures, or coercion by injurious, legal pains or penalties. It must conform to the spirit and substance of the Master's requirement in all respects, bearing witness to the truth, exposing and denouncing error and unrighteousness in high places and low places, suffering patiently any affronts or indignities incurred through fidelity and devotion to Christ, but doing harm to no one, not even the worst enemy. That the great founder of the church exemplified all this is as certain as that he ever appeared in the world, and that he enjoined it without reservation or qualification upon his followers, both as individuals and as a religious body, is equally certain. And the church must live and act upon the same principles and under the impulses of the same spirit or it betrays its trust and forfeits its Christian name. Unlike the Jewish and Mohammedan hierarchies, the Christian Church can prosecute its work, extend its empire, achieve its victories only by the persuasive, quickening, renovating power of truth and love ;

never by the arm of physical violence, never by the bloodshed and slaughter of any of the children of God. Had it scrupulously acted after this fashion it would, ere this, have made far greater conquests than it has now done, and carried the world much farther ahead in its march to the millennium. It will regain its lost opportunity and go speedily on its triumphing way only when it returns to its cast-off allegiance to Christ and shapes its course by his irrevocable law of eternal righteousness under the inspiration of perfect love to God and man. We will consider

3. That when civil government, maintaining its prerogatives and executing its edicts by the power of the sword, claims absolute authority and jurisdiction over the members of the Christian Church, they are enjoined by their acknowledged leader and lawgiver to peaceable submission to its behests; obeying cheerfully when they are founded in justice and serve to promote the common welfare, refusing firmly but kindly when they are unjust and oppressive, and yielding to the force of superior numbers and penal inflictions even to the extent of suffering martyrdom for righteousness' sake, without resort to weapons of carnal warfare or conspiring to revolution by violence and military might. And this on the before-mentioned ground that in some certain sense these governments are ordained of God, and under the divine overruling conduce to the general social order, comfort, welfare, progress, and happiness.

Under this proposition and as subjects of that kingdom which is not of this world the members of Christ's church are not obliged to be co-acting participants in the affairs of civil governments, to assist in running their administrative machinery, or to obey any of their unchristian statutes or injunctions, but to yield cheerful compliance to their demands as taxpayers, as willing subjects of their rightful authority, as supporters of all measures calculated to promote the intellectual, the domestic, the social, and moral well-being and betterment of any or all of the different classes of the people over whom they hold sway; never, under any pretext whatsoever, stirring up hatred, or engaging in rebellion against them, or promoting any sedition, insurrection, or violent outbreak, involving injury, bloodshed, and death to any human being. A poor government is better than no government at all, and a government exceedingly faulty in some things is better than anarchy—moral and social chaos. Absolute personal independence, extreme individualism—every man for himself and no one for another—is an impossibility; were it possible, it would be undesirable as utterly opposed to the genius of Christianity, as obstructive of the operation of some of the strongest impulses of human nature, and as mischievous in its inevitable tendency and effect upon personal character and in society, among the nations and throughout the earth.

Some form of government there must be among men; some form of government there will be, charlatans and theorists to the contrary notwith-

standing. It is a product, a necessity of human nature. It is provided for in the constitution of man, in the economy of the universe. It has been from the beginning of the world; it must be to its end. In the early periods of human existence on the earth, in the early stages of human development, the form of government was simple, crude, imperfect; the germ merely of what was subsequently to be. Out of it, in time, came something more elaborate, complex, organic, but still partial, defective, rudimentary. Among morally degraded, brutal, savage, bloodthirsty people, government assumed, as was most natural, a corresponding character. It enacted barbarous laws; it sanctioned robbery, piracy, and many forms of crime; it established cruel and vindictive punishments; it indulged in war and armed conflicts between man and man; it gloried in the number of its battle-fields, in the hecatombs of human beings it had slaughtered, in the vast areas it had drenched with human blood.

All this was incidental to human nature, an outgrowth of the baser side of human nature. But human nature has another side—a higher, better side—which was all the while prompting to better things—to kindness, to pity, to mercy, to charity. And in the order of divine providence this kindlier, gentler, noble side of human nature was destined to soften and subdue the baser side, to acquire ascendancy over it, and ultimately bring it into complete subjection to itself. Hence amid the rapine and bloodshed of savage tribes and

brutish nations there were other agencies at work, human and divine, to restrain and overcome them, to mitigate their horrors and limit their power. And these higher agencies, as time has gone on, have become proportionally stronger and more commanding, until in many portions of the earth they are largely in control, holding the lower elements of the human constitution—its animal propensities, its selfish ambitions, and sensual passions, its brutality and blood-thirstiness, under much restraint and in comparative subjection to themselves. So has the life of the world risen in the scale of moral values, and the governments of the nations have become humanized, civilized, and, in a certain accommodated sense, Christianized. That is, they have been modified, elevated, transformed, until they incorporate many of the precepts and somewhat of the spirit of Christianity in their legislative enactments, allow Christian influences to modify public policy, and display many virtues and excellences whose leading features are derived directly or indirectly from the teachings of the Nazarene. At the same time they all, in important respects, fail to recognize the absolute supremacy of the religion of Christ, and even set at defiance some of his plainest and most essential teachings and trample in the dust as of nothing worth, in their fundamental law and administrative polity, some of the divinest principles by which he sought to enlighten, uplift, and redeem the world. In other words they all occupy still a lower plane, morally and socially and politically, than that which he

himself occupied and upon which he established his church.

Now I claim and maintain that it is the distinctive mission or function of the Christian Church to teach, exemplify, and operate those great moral forces which may be comprehensively termed the law of God, and which are the only agencies capable of regenerating mankind, and thus hasten their ascendancy in the world; not thwarting or hindering in the meantime any of the lower agencies of governmental creation and control whose harsher dictations and restraints unchristianized peoples, states, and nations, will not and cannot dispense with or displace by higher and nobler ones. The beneficent Author of all things has wisely adapted certain forms of social order to varying grades of human development in the onward progress of the race from the lowest to the highest. Gross natures evolve, providentially, correspondingly gross, crude, barbarous laws, customs, etc.; higher and more refined ones, those suited to their state of advancement; from the most brutish and savage hordes to the most exalted of saints. Truly Christlike men and women under such an economy can use—are required to use—only Christlike means and methods in whatever they undertake without interfering with the ordinary operations of those who are unwilling to govern or be governed by such means and methods. This is a wise and salutary feature of Primitive Christianity. It makes the church representing that Christianity radically progressive and peacefully conservative; gradually drawing the sus-

ceptible and willing to a higher plane of moral and social life, without impairing the legitimate result of the efforts of those whose purposes and plans are not yet conformed to the requirements of the great Teacher.

And in this respect we can but note the moral difference existing between the genius of pure Christianity and that of Democracy or any other form of worldly civil government. The former insists on abstinence from all forms of brutish violence in prosecuting its work and in reliance only upon the benign might of truth and love; agitating for no violent upheavals or revolutions involving bloodshed and slaughter for the redress of grievances, the extinction of abuses, or the promotion of needed reforms. While the latter is ready to inflict vengeful punishment upon offenders; to repel insults and invasions by fire and sword; to appeal to selfish ambition to maintain supremacy; to keep alive the spirit of warlike enthusiasm; to gratify the baser elements of its constituency and intimidate enemies; and to proclaim to all the world its haughty motto, "Peaceably, if we can; forcibly, if we must." Ready too, is it to wade through seas of blood to crush out tyrants or display its own power; reckless of whether or not it may better the condition of mankind. Whenever the church has led, or aided and abetted human governments in schemes involving bloodshed and death, it has turned its back on Christ, or crucified him afresh, been shorn of moral and spiritual power, and proved a curse to the world. Not by destroying men's lives

but by saving them, not by causing men to emulate the tiger and hyena is human progress promoted, but by rendering them personally Christlike, and inducing them to act in all their relations to each other in obedience to the Christian law of perfect love. And thus is indicated most clearly the purpose, the character, the proper business of the true Church, the sole reason for its existence.

Just to the extent that any family, community, state, or nation is illumined with the light and imbued with the spirit of Christ's Gospel is its elevation and progress in all that ennobles and blesses humanity. Without that light and that spirit no amount of mere intellect, of industrial skill, of material wealth, of worldly power, of aesthetic attainment, will avail to bring in the kingdom of God. Nor will any number of legislative restrictions, or police regulations, or political changes, or governmental revolutions, however promising, insure that much-to-be-desired, glorious result. It is the power behind all worldly powers that noiselessly and slowly lifts the human race to purer airs and grander visions. This is not implying that other agencies and forces are of no account in the matter—do no good—but that they are inferior to, and insufficient without, those higher instrumentalities whereby men are rendered more and more like Christ in spirit, conduct, and character. The wisdom of this world thinks otherwise and will, no doubt, repeat, perhaps for ages yet, its old ever-flattering, ever-disappointing experiment; striving to redeem the world by worldly devices, policies,

and instrumentalities; striving to cast out Satan by Satanic means, striving to establish Christ's kingdom by unchristian agencies.

Such being the case it becomes of indispensable importance that the church itself be delivered from its degeneracy; that the blindness and illusion whereby the mass of nominal Christians are infatuated with the notion that the world is to be Christianized by worldly methods and devices, be put forever away. Through this infatuation the church fell from its primitive estate in the days of Constantine, as I have before shown, deceived by promises of increased numbers and influence, by the deceitful sophistries of ecclesiastical domination and political ambition, which led to the formation of an unholy alliance with the state, that robbed it of much of its power for good to the human race; that proved a practical surrender to political, worldly supremacy and dictation. Thinking to use the state for Christian ends, or to employ the policy and mechanism of the state to Christianize the world, the church became de-christianized and was made a tool of by the state for purposes of aggrandizement and fame quite foreign to the spirit and aim of the Gospel, And this practical treason to Christ—this subserviency to the state has continued to this day. And it is a curious fact that a majority of even liberal and progressive Protestants, while denouncing the union of church and state, still hold fast to the idea of political Christianity, of making Christian politicians, Christian patriots, Christian legislators, Christian warriors

even, and Christian mammon-servers ; thus building up what they call Christian civilization, which is little more than a semi-barbaric civilization at best. The church has, to a large extent, capitulated to the state, caters to its wishes and plans, and in the last resort bows implicitly to its behests.

What sort of a Christianity or Christian church is that which thus demeans itself ; which waits upon, bows to, and quails before the civil power ? Which will not or cannot be the vanguard of the world's progress ? Which deems it an honor to be the handmaid of governments that are characterized largely by political chicanery and rest on deadly force ? Which waits on state or national legislation, governmental machinery, penal coercion, constabulary vigilance, and the combined might of armies and navies to put an end to sin and bring in righteousness ? Which pleads the impracticability of living by the precepts and example of Christ till the march of civilization or the coming of the millennium makes it easy and comfortable to do so ?

It is a Christianity from which Christ has been in important respects eliminated ; a church emasculated and shorn of much of its original, God-derived power to renovate and perfect humanity. Such a Christianity and such a church as its representative and working agency befit those who put confidence in princes, who trust worldly instrumentalities for gaining heavenly attainments, who think the divine kingdom can be built on the insecure foundation of political expediency and state policy. We need to transcend all such delusions, and come into the possession of that excellency which the

Master taught and exemplified. Oh, Christ of God, illumine and sanctify the minds and hearts of thy people that they may know and do thy holy and perfect will! Oh, Church of the Lord Jesus, arise, shine in thy pristine splendor; move forward on thine own plane of being and action, morally above and independent of all merely human devices and associations. So shall thou be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the regenerative agency by which a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwell righteousness and peace, shall be built, and the divinely appointed destiny of mankind in this present state of existence shall be fulfilled.

O Bride of the Lamb, as thou claimest to be,
Why seemeth the world so attractive to thee?

What sinful ambition inclines thee to roam,
With strangers and enemies far from thy home?
Say, why are thy garments, once modest and white,
Now torn and polluted and hateful to sight?

What wiles of the tempter have led thee to stray
So far from the Lord's required straight, narrow way?
To surge to and fro with the world's selfish train,
And pay thy devotions in Mammon's false fane?

How strangely thou cleavest to objects of earth!
To things that in flesh and in sense have their birth!
Yet we hope in God's time thy conversion to hail,
When the light of His mercy shall with thee prevail;
When the voice of His spirit shall speak from the skies,
Shall bid thee from treach'ry and guilt to arise.

Then thou wilt cast off thy garments of shame,
Be clothed in new raiment and worthy Christ's name.

No more wilt thou be the handmaid of the state,
But its leader in all that is true, good, and great;
'Neath thy scepter the kingdom of God will embrace
All the children of men, the entire human race.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE TRUE CHURCH A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION.

“If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”—*Luke* ix. 23.

“If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”—*John* xii. 47, 48.

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.”—*Matt.* xviii. 17.

“Yet count him not as an enemy but admonish him as a brother.”—*1 Thess.* iii. 15.

In defining the constitutional nature of Christ's Church in a former discourse, the third distinctive feature of it was stated in these words, to wit:—
“It was a purely voluntary association under the leadership of Christ. Its members came together originally of their own free will, and could remain or withdraw as they might choose. In the exercise of the same liberty new members were received or discharged. At the same time the church was empowered to extend its fellowship to those who wished to enter it, or withdraw or withhold the same for reasons deemed sufficient. Questions of duty or policy were determined by general voice or consent, obtained without compulsion or restraint ;

and no dernier resort to violence or death-dealing force was allowable." To the discussion of this proposition, I now invite attention.

1. That the statement is substantially correct must be so obvious to thoughtful readers of the New Testament that to cite texts or go at length into any attempt at formal demonstration would be superfluous. In the very nature of the case Christ could not have founded a church of compulsory membership, to be maintained and governed by arbitrary rules and resorts to physical force. Such a course would have been contrary to the essential spirit and fundamental principles which he preceptively taught and by which he lived. Neither his religion, his personal character, his distinctive moral and social aims, nor the friendship of then existing worldly governments, admitted it. It would have been an act of extreme inconsistency on his part and circumstantially impossible. We may, therefore, simply glance at the beautiful fitness of this feature of his ecclesiastical superstructure which he designed to have express itself in a new and social order for the governance of his disciples in all the walks and relations of life.

He was dealing with moral agents, with human beings, having minds and hearts of their own, upon whom was laid the burden and obligation of personal responsibility. Adherents, converts, numbers, were nothing in his great scheme of improvement and redemption unless they were gained through honest conviction on their part, by the exercise of their own free will, and remained by reason of their

heartfelt, loyal attachment to him, to their associates, and to the cause they had espoused. Whoever should be with and for him against their own choice would merely *seem* so while they were really aliens. As he was true to himself and to his declared principles and the spirit of his religion, he could not force people into his church if he would, and would not if he could. Voluntariness, absolute freedom, characterized his entire system. As persons outside must come into his church of their own free will, so on the part of those already in and constituting the organic body of believers there must be equally voluntary reception of new-comers and fellowship. None were to force themselves upon unwilling associates. There must be a consenting, cordial welcome or there could be no real, but only nominal, unity and co-operation.

Nor would it do for unworthy, discordant, apostate persons to insist on a continuance of ecclesiastical relations and church privileges against the wish and remonstrance of the main body to which they were attached, properly expressed. There must inhere in that body a right not only to counsel and reprove disorderly and mischief-making members but to disown them in the last resort; not to hate, injure, wrong them under any pretext but to place them where, on moral and religious grounds, they justly belonged, outside and not inside the church, with their own proper company. So in the administration of all its affairs, internal and external, the genius of the church required the cordial consent if not the formal suffrage of the entire fraternity

or communion. It was not for apostles, as such, or ministers of any grade, or influential members to be dictators. It was for such—yea, for any one—to express an opinion, to give counsel, to recommend, to instruct their comrades upon any matter, and then await the general voice of the whole body and not in any case to arbitrarily overrule it. Such, so far as can be ascertained, was the primitive usage. And as to coercion, penal infliction, restraint, or compulsion by force and arms, it never cursed Christian ecclesiasticism until the body of professed believers had prostituted itself and cast away its original simplicity and purity by an unholy alliance with imperial Rome. How morally beautiful and sublime was this voluntary, peaceful character of the primitive Christian church—a church recognizing and founded upon the principles of religious liberty, upon the free will and uncompelled choice of its members, who constituted one common, united, harmonious, Christianized brotherhood.

2. We can now perceive by contrasting the church in its corrupted estate with what it was as Christ instituted it, the vast mischiefs that have arisen in consequence of the apostacy just noted, and especially in regard to the particular feature of church life now under consideration. The decadence began, as shown in the last volume of this work, in the second century, and culminated in the fourth, when freedom of thought and action, involving freedom of choice, upon matters of a religious nature, was either wholly suppressed or

limited to an ostracised and persecuted few brave, independent souls, who not infrequently maintained their inborn liberty at the expense of their lives. Starting with the assumption of exorbitant and irresponsible power on the part of the priesthood and the corresponding degradation of the laity, who became the mere puppets or abject slaves of those set to watch over them in the high places of the church, it grew to such proportions and took upon itself such tyrannical forms, after the church and state united, that all idea of religious liberty, of freedom of conscience and conduct, was abandoned and lost. Upheld by governmental authority and backed by the military establishment of the Roman empire, the church thereafter stood forth before men and angels as a mighty despotism, unscrupulous and arrogant in its claims, merciless in its measures, policies, and modes of administration, the antipode of the primitive church of Christ; scarcely one of its celestial attributes remaining. By fear and force it multiplied its numbers and went forth to the conquest of the world, every step of its onward way marked by the blood of slaughtered men. The church grew exceedingly and vast multitudes were added to it; not, however, of their own free will, by the gentle persuasions of truth and love and the pleadings of the Holy Spirit of God, as in the day of Pentecost, but by the unchristian incentive of the spear and battle-axe. Strange as it may seem it is nevertheless true, that whole nations in the north of Europe embraced the profession of Christianity as one of the conditions of

peace offered them by their nominal Christian invaders and conquerors. And whole regiments of troops were self-baptized and admitted to the church, standing in rivers where the water was breast deep, some priest or bishop reading the appropriate ceremonial service on the bank. The religion of peace and good will was nominally extended through central Europe at the point of the sword. Large numbers of Jews in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries received the faith of the Gospel as the only alternative except death. In Spain and Gaul multitudes were dragged into the churches and baptized by compulsion and violence. Our Saxon ancestors were converted by Charlemagne, when, exhausted and overborne by his victorious arms, they chose to confess Christ rather than be made slaves, as was proposed; and for this wonderful service to the church this blood-thirsty marauder was canonized and enrolled in the category of renowned saints. For hundreds of years this work went on; this involuntary, compelled admission into the so-called Christian church of men who knew nothing and cared nothing for the pure religion of the Master, being addicted to all manner of iniquity and corruption; monsters oftentimes of cruelty and shamelessness. By fear and force were incalculable numbers brought into the so-called fold of the good Shepherd; by fear and force was every form of free, intelligent, humane thought, outside of the established confessions, suppressed and kept in abeyance. Anathemas, pains, and penalties; the racks and tortures of the inquisition; the dungeon, the gibbet,

and the stake ; the horrid accouterments, enginery, and ferocious blood-hounds of war ; threats of purgatorial and endless burnings in the world to come ; all these representatives and instrumentalities of terror and violence were marshalled for service and employed to promote the strength, growth, permanency, and triumph of the church — pretendedly to extend, establish, and glorify the kingdom of the meek and lowly Jesus on the earth.

The Protestant Reformation, notwithstanding all the good it had in its keeping for mankind, did not wholly disenchant the minds of its devotees of the sophistry with which Romanized Christendom in the previous centuries had been beguiled in this regard. The degrading sentiment of fear has been made to play an important part in the development and diffusion of Protestant principles and ideas, and especially in gaining accessions to church membership and in multiplying and extending church activities in different portions of the globe ; notably the fear of divine vengeance and of everlasting torments in a future state of being. By an appeal to this sentiment, good in its place and of great value when rightly used, has religious liberty often been smothered or greatly circumscribed, the deductions of reason have been disparaged or ignored, the purest, noblest intuitions of the immortal mind and the divinest impulses of the undying human soul been discredited and disallowed, and the human will itself, the God-endowed rudder of man's life and the arbiter of his fate, put under unwholesome restraint or diverted from its chosen purpose.

Nor is the church of Protestantdom by any means delivered from the homage of brute force, as represented in military establishments and in civil government based on the war power, to be called into exercise in extreme cases. Even in countries like our own, where church and state have been legally divorced, the church feels hardly secure in its rights and prerogatives, and hardly competent to carry on its work and execute its plans, without placing itself under the sheltering care of the body politic and claiming the privilege of falling back on the state and its reserved martial force to enable it to obtain money for its maintenance, to punish more contumacious offenders, and protect its sanctuaries, its altars, and its communion plate from all invasion. And not infrequently does the church lend its hearty sanction and support, its eulogies and its prayers to the civil government, as a return for favors received, in its preservation of barbarous customs and vindictive punishments, and in its prosecution of wars waged ostensibly in the interests of humanity and for the extension of the realm of Christian (?) civilization. But we may rejoice that the reign of fear and force is essentially weakened, that the unholy league between church and state has been measurably dissolved, and that present tendencies seem to furnish ground for hope that a century more of progress will probably either bring the great body of the church back to the personal freedom and voluntary policy of the time of Christ or cause a considerable portion of that body to organize anew on a basis which shall be pre-eminently

distinguished by that most important and Christlike characteristic.

3. The approaching regenerate church fashioned after the pattern given us in the New Testament will not only be free from the compulsory features just noticed—free from the domination of fear and force and from the embarrassments and hindrances growing out of ecclesiastical complicity with sword-sustained governments, but also free from all traditional notions of birthright membership on the one hand and of vindictive, damnatory excommunication on the other. The voluntary system as a system founded in wisdom and commended to the favor and support of intelligent people implies power of reflection, of reasoning, of deliberate judgment, as well as of uncompelled choice on the part of those to whom it makes its appeal and by whom it is to be adopted as a method of organized activity or form of associate life. Now an infant or a child of immature years is clearly incapable of intelligent thought, of careful reasoning, of sound judgment, and therefore unfitted both on intellectual and moral grounds for full-fledged and responsible membership in the Christian church. The enrollment of such on its register is only nominal, a matter of numbers, and not vital, adding to the real growth and effective power of the body ecclesiastic. It is rather a source of weakness than of strength to that body; it makes it seem in appearance what it is not in fact. A church made up entirely of such members would be of no account as a living, working body, as an institution having

in itself inherent and reserved power to resist and overcome the evil of the world, or to promote and perpetuate the good. The unwisdom of incorporating such elements into it is therefore manifest.

And on the other hand persons within the pale of church membership finding themselves out of accord with the mass of their associates, either in opinion, in moral attainment, or in spiritual experience, and so realizing that they are not in their proper place and sphere, should be permitted to withdraw without alienation of feeling or bitterness of spirit on the part of any one concerned. And certainly any one departing who bears no taint of immorality and displays no evidences of an unchristian spirit or purpose should not be followed by denunciation, contumely, and abuse, but be allowed to go in peace and all kindness; obeying the dictates of his own judgment and conscience, forming such alliances as may please him, and serving his Maker and his fellowmen in ways and by methods and under auspices which he honestly thinks and believes promise more and better than those he leaves behind for the advancement of divine truth, of the cause of Christ, of the kingdom of God.

In this way a wholesome and adequate discipline can be maintained within the membership without offence to Christian principles and the Christian spirit, while individual independence, liberty, and responsibility, freedom of opinion and of speech, will be respected and encouraged and the realm of knowledge upon sacred themes and interests will

be proportionally enlarged. The essentials of religion will under such a regime be better understood and distinguished from non-essentials, pure Christ likeness will be magnified, and much that is merely incidental and comparatively unimportant, now insisted upon and made the occasion of conflicting parties and sects which are both a hindrance and a disgrace to the church as a whole, will be remanded to its proper subordinate place in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs as well as in the creeds of believers. And so will the progress of truth be greatly advanced, the enfranchisement of the human mind and the ennoblement of the human soul be expedited, and the church, winning the confidence and support of all high-minded and great-hearted people, go on its way conquering and to conquer as never before. It will head the procession in the grand march of humanity to its destiny, and no longer be a lackey or bond-servant to worldly governments or to an unchristian civilization, as it has been for more than fifteen hundred years. God speed the day when the eyes of mortal men shall be gladdened by the sight of such a church as this, a truly regenerate church, the primitive church of Christ rehabilitated, reinforced, and reinvigorated by fresh outpourings of the Spirit of God for its holy mission. Then will there be speedily evolved a new order of human society among men and a civilization worthy to bear the name Christian.

4. Another important idea suggested by the voluntary characteristic of the true church is that

of the proper gradation of those connected with it according to their natural or acquired capability and their degree of development in the essentials of the Christian life. As the church is now constituted, with a few notable exceptions, it offers but one standard of measurement, so to speak, for its adherents and their allies; placing them all, if organically related to each other, on one common level of profession, duty, and responsibility. There is one and only one degree for the initiate, which can never be exceeded or outgrown. The ripest saint attains to nothing more in the ecclesiastical curriculum than the humblest, most immature novitiate. The child or convert of whatever age coming into the church not only assents to, and professes to believe in, the assumed essentials of faith and practice held as sacred truth by the oldest and most experienced members, but is counted as the equal follower of Christ and one no less fitted for Heaven. In such a case the chief end sought is gained, "the great transaction's done," salvation is secured. Nothing more is expected, nothing more, certainly, is needed to win divine favor or insure eternal blessedness. The idea of progress in the religious life, of growth in Christlikeness, is not entertained, or if entertained is not urged and required as of vital moment. The only proof many a church-member has of his right relations with God and of his Christian character is the fact that sometime in the past he went through a certain emotional experience which was called conversion, was duly baptized and united with the church. If

a so-called "evangelical," he is very likely looking back to that time as that of his highest and best religious state, the time when he felt most the power of divine realities, and was most at peace with himself and with his Maker. And perhaps he is right in this conviction. For often the aspirations, the loves, the high resolves, the sweet content of such times are of brief duration. The conditions creating them gone, they are gone also. Or they are smothered by the manifest worldliness of the church itself or by the cares and seductions, the demoralizing tendencies of pleasure, business, politics, and social life. But notwithstanding this he rests assured that somehow or other the great work of life was then and there accomplished, that he was ticketed for Heaven, and that Heaven is sure whatever else betide; whether he have much or little of the heavenly spirit in his heart and life or not. Was the primitive Christian such a one as this? And did the primitive church foster, approve, and accept such discipleship? I trow not.

As a matter of fact, the primitive disciple of Jesus was a beginner in the Christian life, a learner in the Master's school, a student of divine things, a rudimental type "of the perfect man according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." He pretended to nothing more. He may have been of mature age, indeed, but he was ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God as proclaimed by the great Revealer, and he sat a docile, willing, tractable pupil at the Master's feet, desirous and eager to be taught of Him. So it was before any

church existed, and so it was when it, by congenial attraction and heart-prompted fellowship, became an associate company or body of believers. All that was then required as a condition of membership in that company or body was a confession of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ — the God-appointed leader and Saviour of men. That confession made, the real work of life was begun, not completed. A vast world of truth was to be studied, applied to life, and exemplified in character; a long path of progress in Christlike righteousness was to be traveled, the end whereof was complete oneness in God and with God.

So were the early disciples taught from the beginning. The kingdom of heaven, Jesus said, was like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field and it grew up till it became the greatest of all herbs, or like leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal and which worked there till the whole was leavened. In a similar way was the seed of divine truth to grow in the life of the disciple, and the leaven of divine love to diffuse itself through his entire character till it had completely reinvigorated, transformed it, made it anew after the character of God. And the Apostles exhort and council their brethren to grow in grace and in divine knowledge; to “add to their faith virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, Godliness; to Godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, love”; “to forget the things that are behind and press forward to

those that were before"; to leave the rudiments of the Gospel and go on to perfection.

And the disciples under the inspiration of this idea of growth, of gradual development, of progress from lower to higher forms of the Christian life; in their adaptation of church appliances and methods to human needs, established a sort of training school or preparatory department in which children and youth and inquirers after divine things could be trained for the church and become qualified for the responsibilities and duties of full membership. Those beginning in the study and practice of Christianity were termed catechumens, of whom there were different grades as in our modern educational institutions, through which the novitiate must pass, before being clothed with the rights, privileges, and powers of full membership. So in the regenerate church of the future will there, no doubt, be ample provision made in its constitution and administrative policy for the orderly training of children and youth and those unused to Christian instruction and nurture, under a system of gradation already somewhat in vogue in many denominations, whereby they shall be fitted and qualified for active, intelligent, and efficient service in the church itself, as properly received, fully equipped members thereof. As there will be also afterward provision for rising by ever-ascending steps of progressive unfolding to the loftiest summits of moral and spiritual achievement.

5. Finally, I may observe that when those who would be the real followers of the Nazarene get

back to the original and true ecclesiastical system, as provided for by him, and have a church organized and administered as a purely voluntary association allowing that perfect freedom of thought and action which has been set forth, there will be little occasion for those outside movements in behalf of moral reform and philanthropic causes that under the long-existing forms of administration have been practically indispensable. For then the good such movements are designed to accomplish can be more effectually secured within the pale of the church by agencies planned and put in motion for specific purposes or by the aggregate body unitedly pushing forward any given benign, humanitarian work. The reconstructed church will be in itself a temperance society, a peace society, or whatever else uncorrupted Christianity dictates; and there will be no fragmentary righteousness or patch-work effort for the bettering of the world, but one grand movement all along the line for universal uplifting, helpfulness, and progress; all reforms, and all beneficent causes being regarded as closely related to each other, to be carried forward simultaneously as parts of one great scheme of redemption, to the advancement and ultimate triumph of which the church by virtue of its distinctive mission is sacredly pledged. Then will those banded together in the name of Christ be "no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the

head even Christ." To such a church "the spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

DISCOURSE V.

THE TRUE CHURCH SELF-SUBSISTING AND INDEPENDENT.

“Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of things that were sold and laid them down at the Apostles feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”—*Acts* iv. 34, 35.

“Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth.”—*Eph.* iv. 28.

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints?” “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?”—*I Cor.* vi. 1, 7.

It is in the spirit and moral significance of these passages, which I bring together as a text for the present Discourse, that I enter upon the consideration of the fourth distinctive feature of the primitive Christian church as formulated thus: “It was a self-providing, self-sustaining, self-governing, self-protecting body in respect to all the real necessities of its own members and their legitimate dependents; none of these being left to the providence, charity, or humanity of the outside world or of any of its

eleemosynary institutions for the supply of anything essential to body, mind, or spirit ; individually or associatively — absolute impossibilities alone excepted."

It is obvious that men and women, voluntarily uniting in the Christian church, are still human beings existing under mortal conditions and subject to all the common necessities of the race. They require food, raiment, shelter, and the various comforts of a home ; in other words, what is indispensable to their physical health and general well-being. They have also those instincts and affections which attract the different sexes to each other and superinduce marriage, the family relation, and household obligations, with the great majority of mankind. Christianity holds these to be laudable and right if not obligatory when not overruled by special considerations of duty to God and man. Families and households are to be not only fed, clothed, protected, but educated, trained, regulated, governed, in such a way as to be intelligent, orderly, useful, honorable members of the domestic circle and of the community at large. In these respects, Christian families are in duty bound by their holy religion, as are all individual Christians, to so far excel the unchristianized masses about them that they shall cost the general public represented in organized civil society — in towns, cities, states, and nations — nothing for restraint and punishment or for the ordinary necessities of physical existence, whilst, on the other hand, they afford it examples of good citizenship, exert upon it a wholesome

moral influence, and contribute in manifold ways to its welfare and prosperity.

How then is the true Christian church to secure at least a tolerable supply of the necessities and comforts of life—a competency of material goods for all its members and dependents? By the very nature of its being as an outcome of the principles and Spirit of the Gospel, it was from the beginning and still is precluded from all resorts to fraud, robbery, and violence; from all methods of thrift and material accumulation involving expense to outsiders—the unchristianized public—whether by force, cunning or beggary. Ought it to depend on the state; that is, on the organized civil governments of the world and their administrative machinery for the things specified? To do so would be to confess its own incapacity to provide for itself—its own thriftlessness and economical imbecility. It would imply that it was too ignorant, indolent, imprudent, wasteful, to be self-subsisting, or that the more productive, prosperous, fortunate classes in its fellowship were too selfish, proud, unprincipled to care for and help those of their associates who for any reason were less favored than themselves; were unable to obtain by their own unaided efforts what was needful to their outward, physical sustenance, comfort, and happiness.

Such a church, professing faith in Christ and in his religion of love to God and man, would prove itself false to its own acknowledged standard—a sham, having nothing of real superiority to the rest of mankind and illustrating no higher morality

than that of the unregenerate world. Moreover, whatever its pretension or its merits, it would be in this regard practically a ward of the state or of the general public, bound by ties of dependence and obligation to pay it homage and bow to its dictation as a superior power that fed and protected it. In such a case its religion, conscience, and righteousness should never presume to withhold its members from such service as its provider and master might exact, however menial, dishonorable, unjust, bloody it might be. The customs of society, the popular will, the edicts of magistrates, the laws on the statute-book, the enactments of Legislatures and Parliaments, the decrees of arbitrary sovereigns, would claim supremacy with much show of equity and reason, and to a large extent would have it granted them. The church, Christ, God, would thus be supplanted or disregarded, or worse still, be casuistically interpreted or construed to sanction and sanctify the temporal "powers that be." This is the absurd, humiliating vassalage under which the church has labored and suffered for fifteen centuries, one of the most degrading, hideous, and deplorable features or manifestations of which has been the repeated armed conflicts into which Christians (so-called) of different communities, states, and nations have been brought with each other;—disciples of the gentle Jesus engaging in the work of mutual slaughter, encouraged by their ministers and priests, who, as chaplains, have been ready and glad to say prayers over the bloody transaction and invoke the help of God in carrying it on to a

final issue. Not so the primitive Christians! Not so the true Christian church!

But to avoid this gross inconsistency and treachery to pure Christianity, and be free from all necessity of attempting to excuse it, the church must be, as the proposition under discussion puts it, "self-providing, self-sustaining, self-governing, self-protecting." This it must be in its own proper sphere and on its own high moral and social plane as a strictly voluntary body, without rebellious conflict against or cowardly subserviency to any social or civil order under which its members live. They must be quiet, peaceable subjects of such order in all matters save those that are hostile to the great principles of truth and righteousness as taught by their great Master. And when for conscience' sake, they are compelled to refuse compliance with requisitions made upon them by the reigning authorities, they must do so meekly yet uncompromisingly, with harm to no one and a willingness to suffer if need be the loss of all things earthly and perishable.

"But," it may be asked, "if these followers of the Christ who are resolved to be loyal to their leader are taxed and otherwise pressed into the support of institutions of a more or less worldly and unchristian character, may they not share in the advantages and emoluments those institutions are ready to bestow upon their benefactors?" Just so far as those advantages and emoluments can be shared and enjoyed innocently and honorably; without offence to God and wrong to man. Many of the fruits of existing civilization can be thus shared

and enjoyed. But those that pertain to penal, military, and pauper establishments cannot. For Christians to seek penal inflictions upon offenders, especially those of a harmful character, to invoke military protection, or to send their poor into the public almshouse, or hand them over to the charity of the general public, is to turn their backs on Christ and prove themselves to be "of this world." And the church which does this deserves only reproach and contempt for all its high professions.

But if the church cannot resort to the provisions named for protection must it not sometimes fare hard and endure great privations in the person of some of its members? Undoubtedly. This was so with the primitive church in its unpopularity and through the persecutions to which it was subjected. Its most faithful representatives have had similar trying experiences all down the ages. But what of that! Such was its destined lot as the regenerative force of the world. It grew strong and efficient by trial, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom. It was not instituted to conform itself to the world, to fawn and cater to the powers of darkness for the sake of ease, gain, and popular applause. Its business was to maintain a standing above the world, to overcome the world and not be overcome by it, and to lift it to its own high level; to Christianize mankind by raising them in the scale of being, not to de-christianize itself by going down to the common level of human thought and conduct.

In saying this I do not imply or admit that the tendency of fidelity to Christ and his Gospel is to

poverty, privation, and suffering in this mortal sphere of being. I believe and would insist on the contrary. The benefits of Christianity are not exclusively for a future world or for man as a spiritual and immortal being; they accrue to human welfare and happiness in this present world and to man as a denizen thereof. Nevertheless its disciples are exposed to toils, struggles, disappointments, manifold sufferings, here on earth. But these are of incidental character and arise from perverse conditions to which all believers are subject in a rudimental state of existence, and through which they must pass to reach higher and holier ones. But shall we conclude from this that real Christians enjoy less and suffer more than others? Nay, verily. God forbid. It is a great delusion to imagine that Christlike souls suffer most and that the un-Christ like and worldly-minded enjoy most in the present state of being. Wealth, rank, station, luxury, all that the selfish and sordid crave as sources of happiness are shared by few of each generation of human kind, and to this few there have come with what they have coveted and gained, so many cares, anxieties, perplexities as often to greatly modify if not overbalance the happiness. On the whole the good man is the gainer not the loser—by being deprived of an excess of these earthly possessions. Is he poor? But there are thousands of the ungodly poorer than he who have none of the inward spiritual comforts and delights that enrapture his soul. Is he wronged, oppressed, outraged?

So are there multitudes besides equally so, with none of those sublime hopes and blissful visions that are his consolation and his unfailing joy. Is he imprisoned, cruelly treated, slain, for his religious faith or fidelity to his convictions, having harmed no man but sought the good of every human being? Behold what millions have been wounded, tortured, slaughtered in cold blood on the battlefield, either in support or defence of a false, worthless religion, or to gratify an unholy ambition, lust of power, revenge, or some other base passion of a depraved heart! Behold the fraud, violence, licentiousness, debauchery, which have made of earth a hell! Consider how guilty and miserable a large portion of the human race is for want of pure and undefiled religion; for want of that faith, hope, love, which are the sum and substance of pure Christianity. And then turn to those worthy to be called Christians, to those who have the spirit and who keep the precepts of Jesus, and consider whether these or the others get the most out of life—the most real satisfaction, comfort, happiness; even out of the present life. Do we not find, looking the world over and all time through, seeing what is occurring before our very eyes day by day, that the devout, earnest, God-trusting, man-loving, good-doing soul really enjoys more, drinks more deeply of the cup of bliss than the carnally-minded, mammon-serving, proudly-ambitious, stony-hearted, God-dishonoring one? even though his wealth be counted by millions, his lands be vast in extent and his dwelling place a splendid

mansion; even though he sit in a high place of state, wear a monarch's jeweled crown, or bear a conqueror's blood-stained name. Do we not find by such a survey that there is in human experience a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these (earthly) things shall be added unto you?" And this other, "There is no man that hath left houses, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time and in the world to come life everlasting?"

We are never to forget that a right state of mind and heart, a sincere love of truth and good, a conscience void of offence, a serene trust in the eternal Divine Providence, temper the rough blast, moderate suffering, soften grief, and at the same time enhance enjoyment and heighten bliss; nay, take away a thousand causes of sorrow and distress, and multiply the sources of satisfaction and delight to an immortal soul. It is, in my judgment, beyond all contradiction or dispute that people thus conditioned in themselves have an incalculable advantage over those of contrary type of temper and character, however favored they may be in a worldly estimate, touching the enjoyment to be derived in this present world from the things of the present world; while at the same time to such the great future that lies beyond the limitations of earth and sense is resplendent with assurances of immortal life and blessedness. Besides all this, as the sublime prin-

ciples of Christ's religion make progress among men, triumphing over the prevailing ignorance, perverseness, and wickedness, which are the chief sources of misery and wretchedness in the world, the domain of human content and joy will be proportionally enlarged; until in the time of the great consummation, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of the Lord Jesús Christ, the gladness and joy of the children of men shall be complete and enduring.

“For sin hath broke the world's deep peace, unstrung
The harmonious chords to which the angels sung;”

and as sin is overcome and put forever away, giving place to holiness and love, so shall the lost harmony be restored and happiness be the perennial lot of mankind. The angelic anthem shall then be taken up again, the chorus swelling with the increasing voice of ransomed multitudes and growing in sweetness and enchanting power as the years go hastening on,

“Till nation after nation taught the strain
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

But to the question, How can the true Christian church be a self-providing, self-sustaining, self-governing, self-protecting body in respect to the things that are indispensable to comfortable physical existence? I reply, (1) By productive industry, careful economy, and a moderate consumption in all departments of material need. (2) By systematic

co-operative counsel and effort for the acquisition, distribution and use of whatever is necessary to human subsistence and comfort in well-ordered human society. (3) By fraternal kindness and generosity on the part of the more favored and prosperous towards those less so; especially towards the impoverished, the unfortunate, and the suffering of their fellowship.

If we examine the history of the primitive church we find that it was a fundamental item of its established policy to make ample provision for the subsistence, comfort, and relief of its needy and suffering members. Even before there was any thing like a formal association of the followers of Jesus, he seems to have instituted a common purse or bag in which were deposited contributions for general use or for the supply of those in want of the necessities of life; of which depository Judas is reported to have been the custodian. (See *John* xii. 6 and xiii. 29.) And after the great day of Pentecost, when there was a marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit and great numbers were added to the church, much of the property of the members was put into a general fund for the same purposes. As it is written—"And all that believed were together and had all things common. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need."—*Acts* ii. 44, 45. And again, "As many as were in possession of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostle's feet, and distribution was made unto

every man according as he had need." — *Acts* iv. 34, 35. In order that the common funds might be duly cared for and judiciously used, seven persons of character and good repute, subsequently called deacons, were appointed to attend to all such matters and be held responsible for their wise and beneficent administration. (See *Acts* vi. 1-6.)

In this feature of the practice of the early church we have an unmistakable indication of the genius of Christianity and of the spirit which should animate the breast of all its true professors. Not that what was then done was an example to be followed by all naming the name of Christ to the end of time. Not that there was any arbitrary rule even then requiring that property should be held in a common fund or depository, or be managed in a definite way, but that there should be a feeling of brotherhood throughout the entire communion; all having an interest in all and none being left in need of any good thing. Under the then existing circumstances, free, spontaneous generosity and charity constituted the chief if not the only source of supply for the needs of the church itself and its dependents. This was all-sufficient for the time being; besides, it was a proof of the sincerity and fidelity of those first adherents of the new faith.

Its Founder and his immediate ministers testified against mammon-worship, covetousness, and inordinate hoarding of worldly property as a sin, ranking in the ethical estimate with pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and all the motley forms of inhumanity. On the other hand they extolled as among the

chiefest of virtues that kindly interest in and regard for the wants, the necessities, the sufferings of fellow-creatures, which prompts to the sacrifice of property, time, talent, and personal advantage for their good. Of this we have ample and indisputable proof which need not be repeated.

Nor was this all. The church could not long subsist on the contributions of previously accumulated capital. Without any growth of membership such accumulations would soon be exhausted, and pauperism would ensue. With the rapid increase of numbers that soon took place there must of necessity be ways and means of acquiring more capital, as also of preventing that already acquired or to be acquired from running to waste. Hence the indispensable need of productive industry, of economy, temperance, and moderate, frugal habits of life generally. Hence all through the Gospel and Epistles are there precepts and injunctions imposing these virtues upon disciples and denouncing idleness, extravagance, luxury, and all those courses in life which tend to improvidence, poverty, and wretchedness. And these precepts and injunctions are in perfect accord with those forbidding excessive love of money, greed of gain, avarice, penuriousness, over-anxiety for the necessities of life, though scoffers and sceptics often array the one against the other in disparagement of the New Testament record and the religion it portrays and commends.

It is equally true that in substance the New Testament plainly sets forth the other asserted

characteristics of the primitive church, self-government, and self-protection. Existing circumstances did not permit or require it to go far in this regard; to formulate systems of organization or methods of administration. The early disciples believed that God himself was their Almighty Protector and that His law was sufficient for their guidance and control. The ancient Scriptures had assured them that "they that trust in the Lord shall not want any good thing"; that "underneath them were the everlasting arms"; that "blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord," etc., and they stood fast by such testimonies. The heathen governments within whose jurisdiction the church sprung into being and existed for several generations, exercised a strong control over its external conditions, often hostile to it, but sometimes beneficent and helpful; yet to a great extent it took care of itself, was independent of the reigning power, managed its own affairs, maintained, amid opposition and persecution, its own standing as one of the growing dynasties of the world. It marked out its own course and followed it in all fidelity and without real cause of offense to any. It fomented no tumults, riots, insurrections, for existing governments to suppress. It made no criminals to be restrained or punished. It furnished no cases to be prosecuted at law, and no paupers to be maintained at the public expense. On the other hand, it bore reproach meekly; it set the best of personal and social examples; it exerted an elevating influence upon the community

at large; it was busy in doing good even to enemies; it was indeed in its day "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth."

In respect to systematic efforts in the direction of self-government and self-protection, the primitive church did little, as I have stated. It devised no plans or methods of civil administration; it founded no new social order. Nothing more than ultimate aims, grand ideals of social and civil order, visions of a coming kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, engaged their thought and energy, with a scrupulous purpose to make their lives fall into line with such aims, ideals, and visions, as far as possible, and to prepare the way for their actualization; to put in motion forces, to proclaim truths, to inaugurate a movement, which under the watchful providence of God should in some coming age produce that sublime result. Under the circumstances they could do nothing more than this. Yet this was of unspeakable importance. It was the beginning of a work that was to be taken up by the church of the then future—the lineal successor of the primitive church—and carried forward to a final triumph. And in that early primitive church we find the indication, the symbol, the type of the true Christian Church as it grows and prospers and ripens into maturity. And in its efforts to realize its own ideals, to bring its conceptions of the divine kingdom into touch with its own life as an inspiration to the noblest and the best, it did start a movement which was calculated and destined to evolve at

length a Christian civilization, a divine order of human society, a political system founded in righteousness and humanity, the promised kingdom of God on earth.

Thus have I outlined the real character of the true church of Christ in those features of it brought to notice in this Discourse ; what it was essentially in the beginning, what it is today, what it will be in the time of the great consummation. And I close what I have to say on the topic under discussion by observing that all notions and customs which merge the nominal Christian Church in what is termed civilization, which involve it in partisan politics, divide it into social castes, excuse its (so-called) higher classes from fraternizing with the lower, send its poor and needy ones to the common alms-house, and amalgamate it with the selfish world are alike anti-Christian and abominable. A church which adopts the world's ruling expedients of trade ; which nurtures its youth for political, military, plutocratic distinction ; which holds the laws, practices, and policies of the state and nation superior to the plain precepts and duties of the Gospel ; which is ambitious to outrival the fashionable world in palatial residences, costly equipage, extravagant tables, and enervating pleasures ; which depends on mammon-worshippers and capitalists for money to support its clergy and supply the means of operating its various activities, is a pseudo-Christian church, having no real relation to him whose name it surreptitiously bears, worthy only of reprobation by all honest souls, and destined to

be supplanted and superseded by a more fitting representative of the great Captain of human salvation, Jesus of Nazareth. God hasten the day when a regenerate church shall take the place of all those which are Christian in name only, and not "in Spirit and in truth."

DISCOURSE VI.

ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

“Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—*Eph.* v. 25–27.

“All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”—*I Cor.* iii. 21–23.

We come now to the consideration of the fifth and last distinctive constitutional peculiarity of the true Christian Church as tabulated in my second Discourse of this series, viz: “It demanded the heartfelt allegiance, devotion, and fidelity of its adherents first to Christ himself as their great Head and then to each other as fellow-members of his body; and also their separate and united endeavor to preserve, sustain, promote, and honor the church by all rightful means and at all hazard of personal cost and sacrifice in preference to any other association, institution, relationship, or interest of human design and adjustment.” That is, under God, the Father of all sentient beings, and Supreme

over all, Christ is to be regarded as chiefest in authority and in claims to loyalty and obedience,—the first in importance; next the church, and all things beside subordinate to these two.

By these affirmations I mean (1) that all allegiance, devotion, and fidelity exercised towards the church must be secondary to those rendered Christ, who is not simply the nominal but the actual Head of the Church, and who therefore is the rightful ruler over it, the final arbiter of its active polity and administration. Consequently no organization assuming to be the Christian Church has any just claim to the reverence and fealty of its members as against those due to Christ, his authority, his principles, and his spirit. If claims of supremacy of that sort are made they are to be ignored or resisted as unwarrantable usurpations. Loyalty to Christ is the primary and the inviolable obligation.

I mean by the declarations made (2) that, in proper subordination to Christ, the true church should command the next highest allegiance, devotion, and fidelity of its members. And by the true church in this connection I mean what each individual disciple of Christ himself honestly deems the properly constituted organic expression of faith in and loyalty to the Master on the part of those bearing His name. It may be the Romish, Greek, or Protestant church, or some dissenting body of an ecclesiastical character, but it must be one's highest ideal of associated, organized Christian discipleship. For this it is his solemn duty to testify and to work; to the maintenance, prosperity, and

efficiency of this, he is under imperative obligation to devote time, energy, pecuniary means, personal service. He may withdraw or stand aloof from any so-called Christian church which he deems false, corrupt, or in any way unworthy the name it bears, but he is in duty bound to unite himself with others in church relationship, even though there be but two or three thus gathered together. In other words he is to act according to the impulses and requirements of his own socially religious nature, and in obedience to that "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which demands unity, brotherhood, co-operation, as a means both of personal growth in grace and divine knowledge and of extending the realm of Christian truth and righteousness among men. "Striving together for the faith of the Gospel" is the demand of the genius of Christianity as it is the condition of Christianity's progress and triumph in the world. Individualism in religion, personal isolation and seclusion, is a bane and not a blessing to him who practices it and to humanity; a hindrance and a foe to the cause of Christ.

By the same statements I mean (3) that while allegiance, devotion, and fidelity to Christ and his church require the proper subordination of all other associations, institutions, relationships, and interests thereto, they do not require any attitude of hostility or of resistance towards them except in cases where there is real setting at naught or trampling under foot principles and precepts which Christ and his church represent and make obligatory upon man-

kind, as inhering in the fundamental moral order of the world and as expressive of the will and law of God. It is obvious to every fairly intelligent mind that there are innumerable respects in which loyalty to Christ and his church involve no conflict whatever with other interests, institutions, and concerns; with the affairs of domestic life, of society, of the general community, of the state and nation. Indeed the only conflicts possible are those in which there is some absolute defect, wrong, or evil on the part of the interests, institutions, and concerns themselves. Such being the case, the conflict will be waged for the purpose of overcoming the existing defect, wrong, or evil, and hence must be ultimately for the good of all parties concerned and of the universal public, thus justifying the claim that Christ and his church must hold the first place in the thought and conduct of his loyal disciples.

That the position taken upon the matter under examination is substantially correct I can see no reason for doubt. If the church is what I have declared it to be on the divine and human side; if its grand design, characteristic features, and capabilities are what I have tried to demonstrate, then its growing ascendancy and final triumph will insure the regeneration, holiness, and happiness of the world; so that the will of God shall some day be done on earth as it is in heaven. A church of this character and possessing such power for good to mankind, under the headship of Christ, is justly entitled to the undivided and supreme allegiance,

devotion, and fidelity of all who enter its fellowship. Such allegiance, devotion, and fidelity it had on the part of those who early in our era voluntarily attached themselves to it as attested by myriads of self-forgetting, uncompromising martyrs.

1. And now let us inquire what would have been the result had the primitive disciples of Christ regarded their obligation to him and to his church of less moment and so less binding than that which characterized their relation to the prevailing customs and institutions of social and civil life. In Palestine and wherever Judaism held sway Christ was at the very beginning of his ministry denounced as a pretender, a schismatic, a destroyer of the law and prophets, and even a blasphemer. The common people were warned against him and those who became his followers were in many instances cast out of the synagogue. What was to be done? Those who had espoused him and his cause must either forsake him altogether and allow his cause to go by default, or, continuing loyal and true, must sacrifice personal reputation, social standing, ecclesiastical honor, and in some cases property and even life itself. Faithful to Jesus, contumely, persecution, imprisonment, torture, death, confronted them. What if they, deterred by such threatening contingencies, had forsaken Christ? What if Christ himself had turned from the light and abandoned his mission? Then Christianity would have been still-born and the church would have come to an early death and been laid silent and powerless in its grave.

Again, suppose that Christ, his disciples and early ambassadors had adopted an artful, clandestine, temporizing policy, concealing their radical principles and their ultimate purpose, and attempted to introduce their new faith into the old Jewish system by stealth, by currying favor from the ruling powers, by sycophantic fawning, and pretended loyalty. Under such a method, what would they have accomplished? Nothing, except to prove themselves imbeciles and cowardly courtiers worthy only of the scorn and execration of all ingenuous, noble-minded people.

Again, suppose that they had subordinated their religion to the popular political regime of their time—to what is called patriotism and the management of affairs of state; had besieged Herod and the Roman governors for place and power, and an opportunity to serve the public for a salary; or had agitated for important social, civil, or perhaps moral reforms through the machinery of the government; or had relied upon political parties and political agencies—the legislative assemblies, the judicial councils, the courts and cabinets of princes and kings—to carry on the work of human-regeneration and bring in the divine kingdom; or had devoted their chief energies to the support and manipulation of worldly, warlike provinces and empires; had employed themselves chiefly in mending and bettering what was called civilization on the common plane of life, what would they have accomplished? A comparatively miserable and pitiable failure they would have made! Some good no

doubt they would have done, but how little contrasted with what they actually brought to pass by their independent, uncompromising course, pursued though it was at incalculable sacrifice on their part.

And so it might be asked of the Apostles and their constituency after Christ had passed away from the earth, as they sought to extend Christianity among the Gentiles. What if by cunning and compromise they had tried to gain the favor of heathen priests, of worldly-wise philosophers, of the ruling powers of Pagandom; or had striven to win popularity and success by fraternizing with potentates and lords and those controlling governmental concerns, in order to gain influence and advantage for the prosecution of their holy work; or had been ambitious for civil and military distinction in the various provinces and kingdoms into which they made their way; or had championed their cause and labored for it outside the church rather than within — on the worldly plane of things rather than on the high spiritual plane of the Gospel — spending time, effort, energy, largely in trying to remodel existing civil institutions, laws, and policies rather than in seeking to enlighten, uplift, regenerate, Christianize those about them and induce them to live according to the law of love to God and man? What if they had thus allowed their religion to mingle with and be virtually lost in or paralyzed by the superstition, barbarism, and degradation with which they came in contact instead of maintaining its distinctive superiority,

marching boldly in advance of them and leading the way to a better future for those with whom their lot was cast and for the world? By such a policy on the part of the early Apostles of Christianity and their co-laborers in their missionary efforts and enterprises the religion of Jesus would have been shorn of its redeeming power, and lost its hold upon the reverence and love, the minds and hearts of mankind. As a new force in human history, its distinctive character would have soon disappeared; as God's agency for the conquest of evil and the inauguration and establishment of the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy on the earth, it would have long since proved the groundlessness of all claims of that nature.

2. Let us consider now how rapidly the church became corrupted, metamorphosed, de-christianized, when it abandoned its lofty position of being an organic representative of that kingdom which is "not of this world," and entered into alliance with that great empire of antiquity which was emphatically "of this world." In the second and third centuries its first step in the departure from the fraternal simplicity of its primitive state was taken by the incipient establishment in its administration of an aristocratic episcopate under which a few provincial and still fewer metropolitan bishops usurped unprecedented authority over the laity and humbler orders of ministering servants. This act on the part of those counted worthy of respect and emulation vitiated the moral standard and the conscience of multitudes who were led thereby to

abandon their scruples against mammonism, worldly ambition, war, oath-taking, and governmental office-holding. Soon after it was that the Roman armies began to obtain recruits from so-called Christian sources and the imperial courts to be officered by so-called Christian incumbents. This prepared the way for as it hastened the formal union of church and state under Constantine in the fourth century. What then? As a result the church thenceforward had in its membership an over-ruled, ostracised, trampled-down minority who still held fast to the profession of their primitive faith, while the vast majority sank rapidly from one degree of demoralization to another till they out-Paganned the old Pagans themselves in almost everything condemned and denounced by Christ and his first Apostles. They held with great tenacity to the Christian name and records but for many generations dishonored both by their immoralities and crimes. The Protestant Reformation, as it was termed, put away many abuses and iniquities but perpetuated a vast amount of pseudo-Christianity, much of which still remains to be overcome and abandoned. Of this false religion, as I have stated in a previous volume, is that politico-military ecclesiasticism which now confounds the church with the world in the moral medley, often termed Christian civilization. This is so confusing and deceptive that incalculable numbers of professing Christians, enlightened in many directions, fail to understand wherein pure Christianity and the existing social and civil order differ, as they fail to recognize any

higher allegiance than that which is claimed by the state or nation in which their lot is cast. They see nothing in the Sermon on the Mount or in the teachings of the Master elsewhere that demands a devotion or loyalty above that due to the magistrate, the legislature, the judiciary, or the executive, under the political system environing them. Society, *as it is*, has to such no radically obnoxious and reprehensible features to be supplanted and put forever away; society *as it is*, improved, garnished, beautified, is, to such, a good type of the society that is to be, in which the Gospel idea of human brotherhood shall be actualized and the knowledge of God cover the earth as the waters cover the depths of the sea. It is a comfort to believe that within the next five hundred years the minds and hearts of men will be disillusionized upon this subject by the shedding abroad therein regenerating light, and that the true nature, office, and responsibility of the Christian church will be understood in some good degree; and also the relation it sustains to "the powers that be" and to the prevailing social and civil order of the world.

3. Let us now consider what would come to pass if the nominal Christian church should assume in all essential respects its primitive form and, under the impulse of a true regenerative transformation, stand fast in its supreme and undivided allegiance to Christ and its own acknowledged principles, holding all other human interests, institutions, and claims strictly secondary and subordi-

nate thereto. I will tell you what I sincerely think, as the dictate of my best judgment, would take place. The standard of righteousness in the church would be greatly exalted; would, in fact, be restored to its original excellence and incorruptibility, which is personal holiness exemplified in reverential love toward God and unselfish love for all mankind. The test of personal virtue and worth would be Christlikeness of spirit, conduct, and moral character as set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, not conformity to the customs and fashions of the world, nor to the usages and opinions of society at large, nor to the laws and requirements of the state or nation, nor to the decrees of ecclesiastical tribunals and traditions of the church coming down from days of medieval darkness and degradation, which still are regarded as of binding authority in some portions of Christendom and as the criteria of human duty and obligation. The lines between the church and the world would be definitely drawn, between the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of human enactments, between the perfect law of love to God and man and the temporizing expediency of civilized society. We should then understand the difference between a Christian and a devotee of mammon or Belial, between the church and the body politic, and hold in just estimation those whose highest allegiance is to God as revealed in His son, Jesus Christ, and so not to any subordinate authority or power however pretentious and imperious or by whatsoever name designated. The

church with Christ as its acknowledged head would lead the world in its advancing march — would lead society and civilization, saying, "This is the more excellent way, walk ye in it."

Under this regenerate, reconstructed system of ecclesiastical life, the members of the church of Christ would act in all things from a profound conviction that their first duty — their supreme obligation next to that which they owed to God, was to their acknowledged Lord, and to the principles and spirit which he taught and exemplified and sought to have embodied in that great institution which since his day has borne his name. They would resolve in all sincerity and with a heroic determination (1) to be personally holy and Christlike in spirit, in conduct, and in character; (2) to consecrate their time, their talents, and their opportunity, primarily, not to any worldly interest, not to political advancement, not to any selfish end or object, but to the cause of Christ and his church; (3) to devote to the same causes, as represented in the great work of benefiting and blessing mankind, the surplus fruits of their productive industry, economical savings, and honestly acquired property of whatever sort over and above such reasonable portions thereof as should be necessary to the health, comfort, education, spiritual growth, and general well-being of themselves, their families, and dependent ones. Thus would Christ have the first love of those professing allegiance to him, and his church; the noblest personal example, the highest mental capabilities, the best

industrial and economical skill, and the most ample pecuniary means at its command; all freely and heartily bestowed for the sustenance of its own organic moral and spiritual life, for the management of its affairs, for the operating of its activities, for the prosecution of its divinely-appointed mission in the world, that of reaching and rescuing sin-lost souls, of lifting mankind to a higher level, of bringing in the kingdom of God. As things now are it is with difficulty that a modicum of these resources can be secured for needed uses. The bulk of them is expended upon selfish ambition, sensual gratification, partisan politics, the maintenance of state and national institutions and policies, the demands of a semi-barbaric civilization. The amount of time, talent, enterprise, skill, productive energy, and pecuniary means now squandered upon merely worldly and factitious objects, upon things that perish with the using or are of secondary or inappreciable worth, not to say useless, vain, and wicked, is astonishing. It is especially astonishing to see how much more ready members of the church themselves are to make expenditures for these things than for the great objects for which the church ought to stand and for the promotion of which the great Head of the church lived, taught, labored, suffered, and died. The trouble is that the religion of the church, if not anti-Christian is pseudo-Christian, and its reigning powers as well as its common membership need to be converted before they can see in its beauty and glory the kingdom of God.

And some day they will be converted each and all of them and the church itself will become "a new creature in Christ"—will be animated by a new spirit, will take on a higher form of life, will proceed with accelerated speed in its proper work, "will accomplish the thing whereunto it was sent" into the world. It will go on "conquering and to conquer" until "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord." It will do this not with carnal weapons but with spiritual ones, not by priestly cunning or pious fraud, not by catering to popular taste, custom, or opinion, not by sycophantic fawning at the feet of political manipulators and rulers, not by conjuring legislatures and cabinets, councillors and kings, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming God's truth, testifying against all forms of iniquity, calling men and nations to repentance for their sins, and standing fast individually and collectively for the truth as it is in Jesus and for the life that is hid with Christ in God.

There is nothing morally desirable, noble, or grand that such a church could not and would not do for the spiritual enlightenment, uplifting, and transformation of the human race. Beginning with individuals and bringing them by a true knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect manhood, "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," it would proceed to elevate and purify marriage and therewith the whole order of domestic life, making it conform to the divine idea and purpose in ordaining it, thence to renew and recon-

struct all departments of social and civil life as represented in communities, townships, states, and nations, until the regeneration and federation of the world as Jesus foreshadowed them were consummated. It would educate and nurture childhood and youth in the way of the Gospel for true usefulness, worth, and honor, and set before opening manhood and womanhood the great end and aim of existence, inducing them "to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It would control and consecrate landed estates in the spirit of brotherhood to the occupancy and use of its members and dependents; establish homes for them free from demoralizing surroundings, free from neighboring dens of drunkenness, sensuality, and shame, and from the tempting nurseries of disorder, crime and moral death. It would found and regulate peaceful, pleasant villages whose inhabitants should want for nothing calculated to make them comfortable, virtuous, contented, happy; should have wholesome and remunerative employment, congenial and healthful companionship, care in sickness or misfortune, educational advantages, means of moral and religious culture; all possible incentives and helps to true and noble living. It would combine and confederate local churches into comprehensive communities, or forms of social order, extend the empire of friendly and fraternal co-operation, multiply institutions and facilities for the betterment of all classes of men, and show the unregenerate and heathen world what true Christianity is and what it can do;

show it, too, how to be wise, holy, and happy, as God intended and requires.

“But all this kind of talk” says the self-satisfied, purblind adorer of present civilization, “is visionary, utopian, impracticable. Men will always be what they ever have been and now are; largely selfish beings; good, bad, and indifferent, agglomerated together in somewhat varying but essentially constant and irreversible proportions. If Christ will . . . have a church here on the earth it must be composed of such material as here exists, and must be animated and governed much as the world in general is; not by high-sounding theories and sublimated moralizings, but by that compound of reason, persuasion, policy, chicanery, diplomacy, and force which always held sway in human affairs.” I reply that such is the wisdom of this world and not of God. It is “not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” It is the wisdom that has always opposed human progress and stood in the way of the advancing reign of righteousness, peace, and love. It is the wisdom of practical Atheism. If sound there is no such thing as pure religion, absolute moral principle, or real virtue. Jesus Christ taught and exemplified all these. The church he founded embraced and illustrated them. What has been done under Christ’s inspiration and guidance in a small way can and shall yet be done universally. He lives still and reigns, king of saints, the leader of his own to final victory. The Holy Spirit, breath of the Infinite God, animates, inspires, directs, empowers men now as in the

olden time. The light of heaven shines now as then, yet in purer radiance and with farther-extended beams. The world at large is in better condition today than formerly to receive and profit by the word of the Lord. The means and methods of imparting and diffusing divine knowledge are more abundant. Good men and women are more earnest in seeking the better way for themselves and for all mankind. The church itself was never more awake to its responsibilities, in this behalf. Let it put on the beautiful garments of Christ; let it arise in its strength; let it gird itself for its God-given work. Then will God prosper it and grant it at length the victory.

Ho! ye who bear the Christian name,
Come, build the church anew;
Its sacred embers re-inflame
On altars pure and true.

Long since its sad decay began,
Its shield became defaced;
Long since its pristine light grew wan,
Its name was sore disgraced.

Corruption stained its holy walls,
Gross error marred its creed,
And baptized Pagans thronged its halls
Though Pagans still in deed.

Its simple faith at first sublime,
Thus mythed with heathen lore,
Gave way to worldliness and crime,
And bitter fruits they bore.

But its foundations still endure,
As ointed eyes can see;
And still its corner-stone is sure
For ages yet to be.

Then let us join with willing hands
This temple to restore;
And make it glorious through all lands
Henceforth, forevermore.

With all our powers of heart and mind —
With all our strength of will,
• • Let us rebuild the church, designed
God's purpose to fulfill.

And shame on him who rests content
With all things as they are;
Whose earth-bound soul, on self intent,
Would human progress bar.

Not so those Christlike ones, who sigh
To hail the end of sin;
To see the promised age draw nigh,
God's blessed reign come in.

DISCOURSE VII.

ESSENTIALS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.” — *Ephs.* ii. 19-21.

In the second discourse of the present volume I stated that the absolute essentials of the true Christian church “might be tabulated under the several heads of Cardinal Objects, Theological Faith, Personal Righteousness, Principles of Social Progress and Order, Established Methods of Organization and Administration.” I now enter upon the detailed and thorough consideration of these several designated topics, both in general and in particular.

What then do I mean by absolute essentials in this connection? I mean acknowledged principles of truth and duty indispensably necessary to the unperverted, healthy condition of the church. That body has been from its very beginning in a healthy, unperverted state—a strictly normal condition, or in an abnormal, unhealthy, perverted one, as it always will be. In order to be in a normal, healthy condition I maintain that certain great

underlying and interpenetrating principles of a moral and spiritual character are absolutely and unqualifiedly necessary, and that therefore it is of primary importance to the existence and true prosperity of the church that these principles should be understood, acknowledged, inculcated, and applied by those concerned in the support and management of the church as a permanent institution of the religious world. I propose now to state those principles in my own language according to the dictates of my own best judgment, allowing that other persons might put them into other forms of speech at their discretion without changing their primary character or significance.

I. THE CARDINAL OBJECTS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. To train its members and dependents, with all who voluntarily place themselves under its guardianship and tutelage, by wisely chosen and applied instruction and discipline, to habitual, permanent Christlikeness of faith, hope, and love; of spirit, conduct, and character.

2. To propagate the true, primitive religion of Christ by all reasonably available means as far and wide as possible, convert the wayward and sinful from darkness to light and from iniquity to righteousness, ever seeking as its ultimate aim the regeneration, holiness, and happiness of the entire human race.

3. To insure to all its orderly members, dependents, and attached probationers, the comforts and necessities of life, physical, intellectual, moral, social, and religious, without slavish and humiliating dependence on the part of any one upon the outside world.

4. To exemplify within the pale of its own affiliated membership a form of personal and social life in advance of existing civilization, as a type and harbinger of the divine order of human society that is to be, when men under the reign of Christ shall dwell together in brotherhood and peace.

5. To demonstrate by practical righteousness in all human relations and affairs the transcendent excellence of pure Christianity over all other religions, philosophies, and moral systems known to men, and thus continually approximate the perfect realization of the Master's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

II. THEOLOGICAL FAITH OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I. *The divine moral order of the world.*

(1.) There is one and but one God, who is self-existent, infinite, all-perfect; an omnipresent Spirit, not a corporeal, localized organism; permeating boundless space and duration and manifestable to finite intelligences at His own pleasure as to time, place, manner, and extent.

(2.) God possesses inherently all the attributes of self-conscious, mental, and moral personality at every point of His omnipresence and is communicable to and with all ingenuous, receptive minds by His Holy Spirit dwelling in and inspiring them. Hence manifold divine manifestations and revelations have been made during the successive periods of human history, in some measure to men generally but especially and with marked demonstrations of reality and power to and through eminent personages or mediators, of whom Jesus of Nazareth was chief.

(3.) There is a vast realm of immaterial and immortal existence inspiring and comprehending the present state of being, wherein dwelleth an innumerable company of angels and spirits of multifarious grade and character sometimes manifestable to kindred spirits dwelling in the flesh; and all the children of men from the beginning to the end of time are by nature and providence destined through a resurrectional process to enter that realm and occupy a place there on higher or lower levels of attainment forevermore.

(4.) All mankind are by nature moral agents, possessing greatly diversified degrees of original capacity and acquired talent, and are therefore proper subjects of moral law, invested with more or less of personal responsibility, and amenable alike to discipline and to punishment or reward in whatever state of being or at whatever stage of development they may be.

(5.) There is a righteous and perfect retribution for all moral agents wherever existing, by

which God in the administration of His divine government causes every one to experience sooner or later such enjoyment or suffering as is most just, merciful, and salutary; always aiming therein at the highest and most durable individual, social, and universal good for both time and eternity.

(6.) Moral and spiritual regeneration by a rising out of animal selfishness and sinful indulgence into the love of heavenly principles—of man and God—as the supreme motive and impulse in life, is indispensable to the deliverance of every human soul from the power of evil and its attainment of Christlike holiness and happiness in this or any possible state of existence.

(7.) It is divinely ordained that, under the mediatorial reign of Christ, good will finally triumph over all evil in the world of humanity, righteousness and peace everywhere prevail, and “God be all in all.”

2. *Christ, The Scriptures, Reason, Conscience.*

(1.) The historical Jesus of Nazareth is pre-eminently the Son of God, the foreordained Christ, Lord and Saviour of the world; to be loved, revered, trusted, and obeyed in all sincerity and loyalty of heart.

(2.) The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain records of indispensable value to mankind, especially those that relate to the Christ, which include promises of his coming and trustworthy testimony concerning his birth, the essential spirit and principles of his religion, his life

and ministry, his death, resurrection, glorification, and ultimate triumph over all the powers of darkness and iniquity.

(3.) These Scriptures are to be revered and studied in order to ascertain the facts, truths, doctrines to which they bear witness; always regarding the spirit rather than the letter of them as of vital importance to the salvation and happiness of mankind.

(4.) The New Testament Scriptures transcend the Old, as they supplement and fulfill them in their teachings of absolute truth and righteousness.

(5.) The free exercise of the reasoning faculties in man—the understanding and the judgment—is necessary to the ascertainment and comprehension of divine truth in its various bearings upon human life and destiny; but the reason has no authority whatever against the truth when once assuredly ascertained.

(6.) Fidelity to one's own conscientious convictions of truth and duty is essential to moral integrity and progress in the Christian life; but conscience is under imperative obligations always to conform itself to the ever-revealing, ever-rising light of God.

III. PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. God, the universal Father, must be worshiped in spirit and in truth, not in formal pretence or glittering display to be seen by men; not in any

merely external solemnity or demonstration; not necessarily at any hallowed time or place; but always and everywhere with profound reverence and adoration for His moral attributes and perfections of character as an infinitely perfect, omnipresent, conscious spirit; and in proportionate degree with a like reverence and adoration for all that is absolutely divine.

2. Men must practice humility, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, whereinsoever self-esteem and self-indulgence are contrary to divine law and order, even unto great suffering and martyrdom for righteousness sake.

3. They must be just to all sentient beings of every name and grade, from the infinite Creator Himself to the lowest creature of His forming hand; in deed, in word, in thought; yet never unmerciful and vindictive.

4. They must be truthful in all exercises and manifestations of mind, in all manner of speech and action, without deceit or guile of any kind, and without resort to oath-taking or fear of penal vengeance from God or man.

5. They must love all moral and sentient beings, from God, the all-perfect One, to the most feeble, most degraded, and vilest of His human children, with that love which "suffereth long and is kind" and which "worketh no ill" to its object.

6. They must be pure, chaste, temperate, decorous, and orderly in all things; in desire, thought, motive, word, deed.

7. They must be patient and persevering, steadfast and courageous, in the furthering of all right aims and pursuits.

8. They must unceasingly endeavor by watchfulness and prayer, by constant progress in holy living, to become more and more Christlike in all respects; to be perfect in righteousness and love as God is perfect; trusting ever in divine strength and grace to supply their deficiencies and enable them to press forward successfully toward the ideal manhood and womanhood of the Gospel of Christ.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH.

1. The supreme, universal, and perfect Fatherhood of God.

2. The universal brotherhood of man and all finite moral agents.

3. The declared perfect love of God to all mankind.

4. The required perfect love of man to God.

5. The required perfect love of man to man, friend and foe.

6. The required just reproof and disfellowship of evil-doers.

7. The required abstinence from resistance of evil with evil.

8. The designed and required unity and harmony of all Christlike souls.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. There should be some prescribed, definite, and clearly understood conditions of membership.

2. There should be wisely prepared consitutional formularies of organic association, to be intelligently adopted and scrupulously observed.

3. There should be some recognized, cordially approved, and duly authenticated order of Christian ministry.

4. There should be some recognized and duly appointed official servants to judiciously care for and execute the various departments of ehurch activity.

5. There should be some clearly defined and easily understood rules of wholesome discipline.

6. There should be provision for the revising and amending of the constitution and established rules of the church, in order to adapt them to the changing conditions of ecclesiastical life and to the ever-advancing progress of the race.

VI. METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE TRUE CHURCH.

1. Members of the true church of Christ should hold frequent, regular, and well ordered gatherings or convocations for mutual edification, religious services, and other purposes conducive of the nurture and growth of the divine life in their own souls and of the moral and spiritual improvement of society at large.

2. The ministry of the true church should commend itself to the laity and to the world by its intellectual competency, its high spirituality and consecration to its work, its exemplary conduct and character, and its efficiency in prosecuting its holy mission.

3. There should be hearty and constant co-operation of ministers, subordinate officers, and members generally in the endeavor to promote the prosperity of the church, the betterment of humanity, and the extension of the domain of truth and righteousness in the earth.

4. Wholesome discipline and good order in all departments of church life should be sedulously maintained.

5. There should be uncompromising fidelity to acknowledged essentials on the part of all church members, while the largest liberty is allowed in all other respects.

6. Due regard should be paid to gradation of discipleship and to the successive steps of Christian progress, from the youngest child and the least advanced convert to the loftiest and most noble saint; but great care should be taken never to lower the standard of pure, practical Christianity.

REMARKS.

Having thus formulated and synthetized what I deem the absolute essentials of the true Christian church according to my clearest understanding and

best judgment, it may be asked to what use such a result of my thought and effort can be put. How can I make what I have done in this matter serve the great ends of life, enhance the interests of organized religion, and promote the cause and kingdom of our Lord? I reply that I confidently expect and prophesy the rise at a not very distant day of a new and regenerate form of the Christian church; one occupying a much higher plane and conforming much more closely to the primitive ideal than that which now exists as represented by any one of the multiform denominations composing it. Such a church will need and will have a distinctive declaratory platform or statement of essential divine principles. I have herein presented, suggestively, at least, the outline and substance of such a platform or statement, and I commend it prospectively to the consideration of those whom God shall honor with the privilege of inaugurating so holy and glorious a movement as I have indicated, for revision and adoption; modifying and recasting it without changing its vital character to meet the then existing circumstances and needs of the church itself and of the world.

Meantime, I am aware that the great mass of professing Christians, whatever the creed or name, now parading or perhaps masquerading under the banner of the Nazarene, will for various reasons set my scheme at naught as in their opinion fatally objectionable. On the one hand so-called Liberal Christians will condemn it outright as a *creed*;

which, whether true or false, good or bad, is *per se* abhorrent to their religious education, their convictions and their tastes. Besides, most of them would dissent widely if not altogether from some of my specified principles and rules of duty, however they might give their personal assent to a majority of them in a general, non-committal way. On the other hand I must expect as a matter of course, that the devotees of the long-established statements of faith in all the great denominational churches of Christendom — the self-styled Evangelicals — will quietly ignore, or, if they speak, will denounce my manifesto as not simply uncalled for and utterly inadequate but as dangerously heretical, both in what it contains and in what it omits in its category of essential items of belief. Such will very naturally reaffirm the excellency and all-sufficiency of their own formularies and treat mine with emphatic though perhaps sincere reprobation or contempt.

What then? What am I to do about all this? What ought I to do? Shall I give way to it and keep silent? Ought I to retire ignominiously from the field of conflict for the truth of God as it has been revealed to me? Heaven forbid! I have a testimony to bear for that truth and for the righteousness which is built upon it as upon everlasting foundations. I have studied long and intensely the parties of the religious world referred to; their positions, their arguments, their spirit, their labors, and their fruits. And I know beyond all peradventure that they are entrenched in great and

indefensible errors which must sooner or later be abandoned. They cannot be more confident that they are right and I wrong than I am that the reverse is true. I therefore join issue with them, not in wrath or scorn, but yet boldly and uncompromisingly. I shall therefore assail their positions which they assume to be impregnable, and defend my own without fear, favor, or suspension of hostilities, till death paralyzes my powers, using only the weapons of spiritual warfare wielded in candor and love but with unwavering assurance of the justice and final triumph of my cause.

Before entering upon the conflict, either with my anti-creed Liberal Christian brethren or with my brethren of the various false-creed schools, which I propose to open in my next discourse and continue in several subsequent ones, I will devote a little time and effort as I bring the present one to a close with a careful statement of what I deem the legitimate requisites, characteristics, and limitations of a sound Christian creed or platform of faith and practice. This will prepare the way for what is to follow and render what will then be said more clear and comprehensible.

1. It should be an honest statement of what appears from a human standpoint to be fundamental truths believed to be divine in their essence and therefore obligatory upon the intellects, hearts, and consciences of men, without assuming that the statement itself is perfect, infallible, and unimprovable.

2. It should be strictly Christian throughout; containing such and only such propositions as are fairly deducible from the New Testament Scriptures and therein set forth as of vital and indispensable value. It should not magnify mere incidentals, expedients, or temporary features into fundamentals, nor rely on doubtful, obscure, or highly figurative passages as trustworthy vehicles of truth, but on the plain concurrent teachings of Christ and his Apostles, so interpreted and applied as to preserve their unquestionable original meaning, spirit, and ultimate purpose.

3. Its affirmed fundamental truths should be such as have a natural, necessary, and positive tendency to induce true righteousness, that is, moral and spiritual likeness to Christ, in those who truly believe in and receive them. Metaphysical abstractions, scholastic substitutes, barren dogmas, and cloudy mysticisms, having no practical value and no definite relation to character, should be excluded.

4. It should assume and declare that a living practical faith in all the essential principles of truth and righteousness is indispensable to the full and perfect salvation and happiness of any and every human being; but it should not assume that such faith in any case is necessary to secure God's love and favor in time or eternity, nor that it is necessary to lower degrees of salvation and happiness, nor to the just approval of any truth or good by whomsoever exemplified, nor to the hope that all human souls however sin-lost and incorrigible will

finally embrace it and enjoy its blessings and delights. And it should peremptorily forbid all persecution, injustice, and unkindness even, to dissenters and seceders.

5. It should recognize and conform to the law of progress, adapting itself to different degrees and grades of discipleship; no one being required to profess anything of faith or practice which is beyond his or her comprehension, and no one being allowed to imagine or suppose that he or she has mastered the science of divine living as inculcated by Christ while as yet in its rudiments, having attained unto little or nothing more than the first principles of the divine oracles.

6. It should contain the germinal principle or potential substance of all that is to be taught, required, or promulgated in the church which adopts it as absolutely essential to Christian living, but should provide for the largest liberty in all things beside.

7. It should be thoroughly consistent with itself, with reason, with the known facts and laws of nature, and with all the unquestionable verities of science; but it should not deify reason, nature, science, or in any way exalt them above God, Christ, divine revelations, or the eternal realities.

8. It should unequivocally provide for its own re-examination, revision, and emendation from time to time as occasion requires, for re-adjustment to changed conditions and circumstances, needs and exigencies, and never be made a bar to the intel-

lectual, moral, and spiritual development and progress of its adherents.

Having thus given expression to my views and well-settled convictions respecting a sound Christian creed or declaration of faith, I am prepared to confront those who reject all such tabulated and acknowledged forms of doctrine or statements of belief as hostile to freedom of thought and opinion and hindrances to the onward march of the individual soul and of the race toward perfection. My contention with such is reserved for my next discourse. Meanwhile may divine guidance and inspiration direct us in the way that leads towards and into all truth and good.

DISCOURSE VIII.

IMPORTANCE OF A DECLARATION OF FAITH.

“There is one body and one Spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” — *Ephs.* iv. 4-6.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful who promised.” — *Heb.* x. 23.

Before entering upon the more definite discussion of the subject of the present discourse, I have something to say by way of introduction in regard to my Liberal Christian brethren, who, as a rule, though to a varying extent, are self-confessed anti-creedists, both in theory and practice. They not only object to any formal declarations of belief as tests of church membership or criteria of character but also as expressions or formulated statements of their own personal or associated opinions and convictions of truth and duty, however conscientiously and firmly held they may be. Most of those referred to very likely agree with me upon nearly all important points of speculative theology and personal righteousness as well as upon matters of ecclesiastical polity, though dissenting it may be in a few particulars. But they honestly distrust, disown, and denounce creeds, *per se*, deeming

them hostile to mental freedom and true religious progress.

There are several schools or grades of anti-creedists, though they are all of one family genus, and agree in making religious liberty in the church of more importance than unity of faith in definitely declared essentials. The most ultra of them protest against all standards of theological or moral doctrine and all distinctively religious organizations. Such are, at least, self-consistent, albeit they are mere discussionists and iconoclasts, so far as religion is concerned, to whom it would be annihilation to enter into any formal agreement with those most in accord with them or even with each other. Others would consent to a general declaration of recognized truths, provided it were sufficiently flexible and accommodating. Still others concede that an acknowledgement of faith in Christ and Christianity is important, but would leave all interpretations and appliances of the same to each individual judgment and conscience. While yet another, and the most conservative school, perhaps, would take the Bible and especially the New Testament as an all-sufficient basis of church relationship and rule of faith and practice.

Among these multiform orders of anti-creedists have been numbered men and women of high and eminent standing, distinguished for their talents, learning, piety, moral virtues, and philanthropic labors, and as a whole, it may be confessed, no less sincere, intelligent, and exemplary in their walk and conversation than is the average of those who

hold to the value and necessity to true church life and to individual character of definite, well-appointed beliefs or confessions of faith. Yet their sincerity, intelligence, and personal moral excellence may co-exist with radical error upon the points at issue between me and them, and should not shield them from honest criticism or from the shafts of vigorous but friendly attack on the part of any one who may differ from them, as I feel it to be my duty to do in the present case. With this preliminary statement I proceed to the discussion of the question in hand:—endeavoring to demonstrate as I go on the truth of the proposition that the true Christian church must have a creed or platform of faith and practice, and substantially such an one as I have definitely outlined. Nor shall I refrain in the task before me from using freely the much abused and in some circles the much discredited and dishonored term, CREED.

What is a creed? The word is no doubt derived from the Latin *credo*, which means, *I believe*. Hence its legitimate use as applied to a confession or statement of belief in certain formal propositions purporting to embody the great, essential principles of truth and duty pertaining to the realm of religion and the religious life. Whatever statement of doctrine touching the theory or practice of men as moral and spiritual beings may be received as true by any individual or society and essential to human salvation and happiness is properly the creed of that person or people. It may consist of few or many propositions; it may be written or unwritten;

it may be general or specific ; it may be logically or illogically expressed ; it may bear one or another name ;—it is still a creed, a declaration of what is actually held as essential truth. Thus every sincere religionist or moral philosopher, every thinking person whose thinking brings him to a definite conclusion of his understanding, must have a creed. For the reason that he necessarily bases his religion or morality or opinion upon some assumed truth ; otherwise he has no sure ground for his position. His belief may be beyond doubt as based on actual knowledge, or it may be more or less hypothetical as based on inference or intuition—on foundations of the reality of which in the nature of the case there can be no absolute proof, though proof sufficient for all real human need. We walk often more by faith than by sight ; and yet we get on all the same. The most inveterate skeptic opposing any and every form of doctrinal belief must have a creed, though it be but a negative, unformulated one, or his argument is a mere flow of words signifying nothing. He must believe in not believing and by his effort to defend himself in his anti-creedism cuts the ground from under his own feet.

And yet many anti-creedists are most assumptive and dogmatic in denouncing assumption and dogmatism, as they often are in affirming and urging their own postulates and theses. Creed-impugning Liberal Christians profess to hold and teach the doctrine of a personal God, of His distinctive Fatherhood, of the leadership of Christ, of

the brotherhood of man, of moral responsibility, of an immortal existence, etc. Now if these things are really believed and if they are urged upon congregations and upon the world as worthy of acceptance, do they not constitute to all intents and purposes, a creed, a statement of faith; and, if so, why should they not be called such and publicly acknowledged accordingly? Or, on the other hand, if they are not worthy of belief, not suitable to be formulated in a statement of faith, why should they be so emphatically and even dogmatically announced and proclaimed abroad? The only consistent anti-creedists are those persons who have no settled convictions of truth and duty, no fundamental principles in morals and religion, and prefer to have none; who sit as critics upon all who have them and often as their accusers and detractors; who hold all matters of thought and judgment in solution; who profess to be *par excellence* mere inquirers, investigators, free discussionists; who are ever searching after but never finding the truth; who prize freedom of dissent above sympathetic and co-operative unity; who deem assent to divine realities and conformity to any standards an offense to personal dignity; and who oppose and reprobate not only all forms of religious organization, but all systematic, helpful, associated effort in any behalf;—man working with man in a common cause to common ends whatever they may be. With such it is hardly worth while to argue, at least in this connection.

But with those who profess to believe in Christ and his church in some honest fashion, and who, though they decry creeds, *per se*, really have one, as their profession implies, I shall proceed to argue hopefully. At the outset let us inquire what the true Christian church is. Who are its constituents? I ask. Not anti-religious skeptics, having no settled convictions of divine truth and no high and holy objects to live for—not mere free inquirers and discussionists, but persons who avow their sincere faith that Jesus of Nazareth is in some sense the Christ; or, at least, in the providence of God, the spiritual Leader, Exemplar, Savior of mankind, and who acknowledge themselves to be his disciples, humbly endeavoring to learn of him and to follow him as he is made known to them in the New Testament writings, which they deem a trustworthy record, if properly interpreted and understood, of him, of his teachings, and of his work in the world. They do not claim to be “individual sovereigns” in matters of faith and practice, each one standing in his own lot regardless of all beside, but “fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” They consider themselves sacredly bound not to lord it over one another, nor to strive for any pre-eminence save that of being most humble and serviceable to God and man. They regard themselves as co-laborers together for the common good and for the salvation of the world, related to each other personally

and collectively as are the members of the human body in one organism, having different offices to fill but filling them without friction or schism, and constituting in their associated capacity what is termed "the body of Christ," he being its head, whose most impressive prayer was that "that they all might be one as he and the Father are one." This being the case it seems to me evident that the Christian church must have its standard of faith or platform of fundamental principles, substantially as set forth in my last discourse, and for several definite reasons which I proceed to state.

1. There can be in the very nature of things no such heartfelt, effective unity and co-operation as has been suggested and as Christianity enjoins without concordant ideas concerning the great fundamentals of religious truth and duty. Not only must there be spiritual harmony, but on vital matters, in respect to the essentials of life and character, there must also be intellectual harmony no less. Diversity of opinion may be allowed and even encouraged upon points of minor importance, but upon central ideas or principles, the distinctive peculiarities of Christian association, there must be substantial unanimity,—a common and definitely understood ground of thought and action. "How can two (or any larger number) walk together except they be agreed." The old apothegm holds good here: "In non-essentials, liberty; in essentials, unity; in all things, charity."

2. The true church of Christ is an educative and propagative institution, and is equipped with

the various instrumentalities requisite to that complex work. But what is to be taught, promulgated, sent abroad throughout the world? Of course that for which the church primarily stands; those great doctrines, principles, ideas, which are represented in the church and to which common consent is formally or impliedly given. Otherwise there is confusion worse confounded; a jargon of ambiguous, conflicting voices, none of them having authority or significance. In such a case the church itself has no reason for being.

3. Moreover, the true church is a disciplinary, progressive, perfective institution. But there can be no discipline where there is no standard of thought and conduct. Even self-discipline, which is involved in the disciplinary character of the church, requires and necessitates such a standard. Much more, mutual discipline; the training of one another to the actualization of high ideals, the development in one another of the moral and spiritual capacities by counsel, example, and other modes of helpfulness. And how can progress be made except by an increase of that knowledge of essential truth in which progress consists, be it scientific, metaphysical, moral or religious progress. And that essential truth must be formulated, clothed in speech that renders it apprehensible by the human mind and heart, or it avails nothing. And so it is with respect to the perfective agency of the church; its mission in carrying the souls of men onward and upward to the highest possible degrees of attainment in virtue and piety. Virtue and piety

are ideals of excellence born of essential corresponding principles inhering in the constitution of things, a recognition and appropriation of which constitute the nutriment upon which souls grow into the measure of a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus.

Such are my three principal reasons for holding to the necessity of some such creed or declaration of faith as I have suggested for the proper and effective organization and administration of the Christian church. I will now notice the principal objections that dissenting brethren have made and may still make to my position, some of which have already been hinted at.

1. Creeds, it is said, especially definite, formal ones, restrict and endanger freedom of thought and action. This cannot be true of creeds, *per se*, but only of false and misleading ones. It certainly can not be true of those which, however imperfect and defective, provide for their own emendation and make it the duty of those accepting them to secure such emendation whenever its need becomes obvious. If it be true that creeds in and of themselves imperil liberty of thought and conduct then it is true that absolute principles of truth and duty do the same; for a creed is only a definitive statement of such principles so far as they are understood and sincerely believed. Does it impair one's mental freedom to have certain well-settled convictions of truth and right, or, having them, to express them in certain plainly stated propositions, making them intelligible to the human understanding? Does it endanger one's right or power

to think for himself, to hold that there are certain principles of wisdom and beautiful divine order upon which the universe is founded and by which it is governed, or, holding that there are such, to frame them into human language that so they may be the more intelligible to the common mind, and perchance to himself, and thus be made a power of order, virtue, and harmony in the life of mankind? I can not so see it. On the other hand I maintain that the more such principles are put into understandable forms and made real and vital to men the greater liberty do they enjoy. It is the truth that makes men free. Ignorance of the truth, or the truth inadequately expressed, the truth in obscure, ambiguous forms, enslaves men; often deceives, misleads, destroys them. He only is blest in his freedom who by his freedom has come to a clear understanding of the essential conditions of moral order in the universe and conforms to them. So do his energies acquire a larger freedom and his power of good a broader empire. And by the diffusion of those principles, which can only be done by embodying them in proper forms of speech, by giving them the character if not the exact form of a creed, he makes his growing freedom a means of enfranchisement and redemption to other men and to the world. But may he not mistake, putting error for truth and raising a false or defective standard of belief? Of course he may. But, if he do this, he can recast his convictions and reconstruct his creed when greater light dawns upon him. And this he will

do if he make progress in the true way of life. No one should be bound not to change his convictions or his creed but rather to change either or both when they do not represent truly the decisions of his thought and conscience. And thus will he not restrict and imperil his real freedom but augment and ennoble it.

2. Again, it is said that the creeds of the nominal Christian church since apostolic times have required assent to falsities, absurdities, paradoxical subtleties, barren dogmas, nearly all of which have occasioned strife, division, persecution, or some other abomination hostile to the spirit of Christ and to the truest welfare of mankind. Then let them be amended or superseded by better ones; such as I have outlined. But while I concede the existence of the faults and evils alleged, I am not certain that they all resulted from the established creeds. The intellectual and moral condition of society outside as well as inside the nominal church had much to do with the matter and would have produced the same or perhaps greater mischiefs if there had been no creeds. There was truth as well as error in those creeds and I am inclined to believe that notwithstanding their grievous faults they did more good than harm. Be that as it may their defects and consequent evils form no valid arguments against creeds *per se*, any more than the defects and evils attendant upon any other human interest, as for instance, education and educational institutions, prove the inherent inutility or wrongfulness of the interest itself.

3. It may also be said that there is no need of a statement of faith more specific or elaborate than that of Peter at the outset, to wit :— “I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” This may have been and no doubt was sufficient, at first, for beginners in the Christian life and may be now for inductives, though I deem additions important. But times and circumstances change, requiring change, more or less, in declarations of Christian truth and duty. Essentials are evermore the same ; but incidentals—formularies and specifications—are capable of modification ; must be adapted to the needs of varying states and ages. Adequate as the confession quoted was in that far-off day, the day of small things, something more comprehensive and complete is required in the present age of the world ; a higher, broader, clearer declaration of essential principles, of the foundation truths of pure religion. The regeneration of the church, the development of the human mind, the reconstruction of society, the order of the world’s progress, all demand it. Because long continued perversion and corruption in the church have turned men away from the pure Christianity of the Master and beguiled them with dogmas, formalities, and conventionalities not sanctioned but condemned in the New Testament, leading them into gross error and superstition, they need to be enlightened, brought back to and re-established in the truth as it is in Jesus. And in order to do this it is absolutely necessary to state anew what that

truth is in its essentials. To dispel the darkness the true light must be made to shine.

Moreover, the pulpit and religious press of the present day, with rare exceptions, do not give either professed Christians or the world in general any clear, definite idea of what either theoretical or practical Christianity is. This is owing in part to the still prevailing dominance of ancient false dogmas and traditions concerning Christianity, and in part to the vague, equivocal, illogical, and foggy manner in which it is taught and enforced. The absolute, pure, exalted theology, piety, morality of the Gospel are not clearly set forth; nor the intrinsic nature, purpose, and results of Christ's mission; nor the distinguishing particulars in which Christianity differs from and is superior to other religions and philosophies, or, in its legitimate outcome and results, excels existing civilization. There are all sorts of preaching, exposition, and exhortation, some of which is interesting and superficially good; but even this often leaves the mind in doubt or confusion as to truth and duty, and the high claims of the law of God. Christianity and worldliness are so mixed together; love and hate, kindness and cruelty, peace and war, philanthropy and inhumanity, universal brotherhood and a narrow patriotism, piety and practical ungodliness are so intermingled and blended in a common mass, that the average understanding is perplexed, distracted, confounded thereby rather than enlightened, inspired, and assured in regard either to the law of righteousness or to the line of duty to God

and man. In such a confused, bewildering condition of things it becomes an imperative duty to formulate a statement of fundamental principles, to make declaration of the great essentials of faith and practice, that so men may be instructed and enlarged in thought concerning the things of the kingdom of God and won to consecrated service under Him who is the Chief Ruler in that kingdom.

Finally, indefinitism, mystification, superficiality, and at best an unintelligent goodyism will continue to prevail in the religious world until there is a breaking through all these pointless platitudes, glittering generalities, and pietistic mummeries, and a plain, unequivocal, comprehensible statement made of what Christianity is in its purity and original excellence and in the inexorable obligations it lays upon the minds, the hearts, and the consciences of men. When this is done, and not till then, will there be reared a class of Christians and a church composed of intelligent, earnest, robust, heroic men and women, "Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Then will the church be renewed not only in spirituality and devoutness, but in holy courage and unfaltering zeal, going on its way conquering and to conquer until its victory over sin and the world is complete and universal.

4. Once more, it is said that we have the Bible and is not that a sufficient rule of faith and practice? Not unless we make a better use of it than most professing Christians have done in the past.

How have they mingled its history, chronology, geography, genealogy, allegory, parable, poetry, hyperbole, and sumptuous oriental imagery with its piety, morality, philanthropy, and lofty spirituality together in one conglomerate mass, labeling it all the word of God and counting it all equally worthy of acceptance and equally "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," to the offence of an enlightened understanding, of all sound exegesis, and of every high-minded soul! How have they joined hands with the skeptic and the blasphemer in quoting it as authority for the support of slavery, intolerance, capital punishment, war, the use of intoxicants, persecution, and almost every known abomination that outraged and injured man and dishonored God! How have they, on assumed Bible authority, separated themselves into a host of wrangling sects, contending oftentimes unto bloodshed and death for the mastery, more diligent in striving to overcome each other than to conquer the evil of their own hearts and the wickedness of the world, a disgrace to themselves and a hindrance to the cause of Christ! What is needed to remedy this deplorable state of things—this unreasonable, loose, confused, mischievous view of the Bible—this misapprehension and abuse of its authority, is a condensed tabulation of its great distinguishing ideas, of its fundamental principles and eternal truths, stripped of their husky verbiage, of all incidental adjuncts, and put before the world in the simplest, most easily understood terms possible, justly representing in human lan-

guage the religion of Christ as he taught and exemplified it and his Apostles after him according to the New Testament Scriptures. Such is my deliberate and conscientious judgment concerning this matter, and, being such, I can give the objection under notice no real respect.

5. Finally, it may be said, and is said, that Christianity is not a creed but a life, not a system of formulated doctrines, but character—a loving, holy, Christlike life and character. Whoever leads such a life and exemplifies such a character is a Christian whatever his creed, or without any creed at all. I will yield to no one in magnifying the importance of a loving, holy, Christlike life and character; but I cannot disparage the value of a creed on that account. If the plea urged proves anything it proves too much. It assumes that there was such a personage as Jesus Christ; that he illustrated such virtues as love, as holiness, combined with certain other moral and spiritual qualities, constituting in the aggregate what is termed Christlikeness; and that these qualities are worthy of esteem, reverence, emulation. Furthermore, it implies even to the extent of demonstration that he who urges the plea has in fact a creed, a form of belief; though it may not be a written one, it may yet be a real one notwithstanding. Nay it *must* be so. He must believe in some sense in Jesus; he must believe that he existed, that he was a great teacher, benefactor, leader of mankind, that he inculcated and illustrated great principles of truth and righteousness making him worthy of

remembrance and imitation ; he must believe those principles, when applied to human life and character, are capable of exalting, ennobling, perfecting them, harmonizing them with the life and character of God ; he must believe, too, in some fashion in the credibility of the Christian Scriptures as a biography of Christ, as a record of his labors, teachings, sufferings, and death, and as a testimonial to those truths and that spirit which are the foundation stones, the vital forces, the animating energy of his religion. And if he does not believe these things his assertion of the supremacy of the Christian life and character has no basis in reason ; if he does believe them then his objection is without justification. His own position is its sufficient refutation. The very objection invalidates itself.

Or, admitting for a moment that it has force and especially that part of it which affirms that whoever possess the Christlike life and character is a Christian, whatever his creed or without any creed at all ; admitting this, it follows that the truth has no intrinsic moral power to mould the hearts and lives of men to high and noble issues, that Paganism, or Brahminism, or Judaism, or Nothingarianism is as likely to produce a righteous, holy life as Christianity ; in other words, that right ideas, right thoughts, right convictions, have no definite relation to life and character, and that error is as important and effective as truth as a factor in the problem of personal uplifting and perfecting, and of human progress and happiness—an absurdity on the face of it.

In drawing this discourse to a close I may remark that what I have said is sufficient to disprove the allegations of my anti-creedist friends of whatever school, and to show the importance of a definite platform of essential moral and religious doctrines, principles, and ideas, upon which the Christian church must stand in order to do its divinely-commissioned work in the world; a platform substantially like that framed in my last. In my next I shall enter upon the exposition, verification, and defence of that platform in its several distinguishing features and characteristics.

DISCOURSE IX.

EXPOSITION AND DEFENCE OF CARDINAL OBJECTS.

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”—
2 Tim. i. 13.

“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”—
1 Pet. iii. 13.

Having shown in my last discourse that a creed or platform of distinctive principles and objects is necessary to the proper organization and efficient administration of a Christian church, indicating some of the characteristics and limitations to be observed in framing one, it is now incumbent on me to explain, verify, and defend my own, as already presented to my readers, which I assume to be founded on reason and the fundamental truth of the New Testament, differing though it does in more or less important respects from all those that have been tenaciously held and honestly believed by the varying sections of Christendom. The devotees of long established systems of faith, strenuous in maintaining and perpetuating their own ancient confessions, will, of course, disallow and denounce mine as erroneous and misleading in whatever par-

ticular it differs from theirs, whether by addition, omission, or contradiction. I must therefore meet them in advance fairly and openly upon every point at issue between us. I commence my exposition with what I term the *Cardinal Objects* of a Christian church.

Whether there has ever been or now is any formal statement in regard to this feature of my platform, corresponding to what I have placed under this name, in any other ecclesiastical formularies, I am not certain. Probably not; though that fact does not render its value less obvious to the thoughtful mind. Yet, no doubt, all religious bodies have put forth declarations, more or less explicit, setting forth the purposes and aims which they were instituted to promote and secure. Be this as it may, it is my duty to explain, verify, and defend my own position in this matter, and hence I proceed to do so.

OBJECT I. "To train its members and dependents, and all who voluntarily place themselves under its guardianship and tutelage, by wisely chosen and applied instruction and discipline, to habitual, permanent Christlikeness of faith, hope, and love; of spirit, conduct, and character." In this definite statement I have included all those persons, old and young, who may be properly regarded as in any way related to the church, whether by positive formal admission to its membership or otherwise, and to whom the church is under special obligations to watch over, care for, and qualify for useful and honorable service of God and man. Wisely

chosen and applied instruction and discipline include all justifiable Christian methods of teaching; of informing the mind and developing the native capacities of a human being, of regulating and controlling the conduct, of correcting faults and errors of whatever sort, and of ennobling and perfecting the character and life. Habitual and permanent Christlikeness, of faith, hope, and love—of spirit, conduct, and character, is the being conformed to Christ's teaching and example in respect to essential truths believed, in respect to the ruling motive, disposition, temper, in respect to personal righteousness of every kind, and in respect to all that constitutes moral excellence and worth; not including official dignity, authority, power, and glory. To train its subjects into the likeness of such a model is to render them true Christians, theoretically and practically, nominally and really, employing all the agencies, instrumentalities, and co-operative influences of the church faithfully to the accomplishment of that great end.

It is hardly possible to conceive that any company of intelligent persons assuming the name and the prerogatives of a church of Christ should deny or seriously question what I have stated to be one of the Cardinal Objects of the true church—an absolutely essential principle of the Christian faith. Yet some persons claiming to be followers of the Nazarene might question the form in which I have put the matter; others might doubt the need or desirability of formulating it at all; while others still and indeed many might deny altogether the

truth of my proposition. There are those today who say, as there have been multitudes in the past who have said, that it was not a cardinal object of the church as it was not a cardinal object of Christ's mission, to make men like Christ, to renew and transform human character and bring it into accord with the character of Jesus, to make men pure, loving, true, holy, but rather to impart to them what is termed saving faith, a true knowledge of God and of the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer; to induce them to repent, to come to Jesus, to accept the conditions of salvation; to prepare them for death and fit them for heaven. Of how many an exhortation, sermon, magazine article, volume, has that been the burden, the main thing insisted upon, the one thing needful, the most important of all possible concerns, upon which hinged incalculable destinies of good or ill, of happiness or misery, of beatific joy or despairing agony for a never-ending eternity. Not that Christlikeness was not a good and desirable thing in the estimation of the authors of such application of the divine word; not that holiness of heart and life, excellence of character, personal righteousness, etc., were not important acquirements in their proper places, but that they were not the chief thing, the essential thing, the crowning object of human concern and pursuit, the great end of life. That was to be reconciled to God, to believe certain dogmas, to accept certain terms of salvation, to make the calling and election sure, to escape endless tortures, to secure endless bliss.

The other attainments — virtue, purity, love, holiness — would follow in the train of those specified as incidental to them, consequential of them, deriving worth from them, but were not of indispensable value in and of themselves, the transcendent, inestimable, eternal possessions of the soul. With all such expositors and expositions I take issue and challenge refutation on either rational or scriptural grounds, re-affirming with ever-increasing assurance my main proposition that it is *the* Cardinal Object, meaning, purpose, end of the Christian Church, as it was of the mission of Jesus, to save men, here and now, in this world and in all coming worlds, from sin, from the power of evil; or, on the positive side, to train them to and to build them up in Christlikeness of spirit, conduct, and character through a corresponding Christlikeness of faith, hope, and love; this the means, that the great, glorious, incomparable end.

In the work of promoting or attaining that end, ever obligatory on the church as its primal, fundamental concern, Jesus was the God-given Exemplar and Forerunner. His faith in all the essentials of pure religion was perfect; as was also his conscientiousness, his humility, his forbearance, his mercy, his unselfishness, his benevolence, his impartiality; in short, his unwavering, loyal, love toward God, righteousness, truth, and all mankind. Such being the case, is it for his church to ignore or underestimate all those high-born qualities, attributes, as they are, not only of Christ's pre-eminent character but of the character of God, constituting as they

do in their ultimate and infinite expression the perfections of Deity? Is it for Christ's church to train those under its tuition or allow them with its sanction and approval to be indifferent to the things that the Master in His teachings and life made of vital importance, to forget or ignore the fundamentals of his religion, to be unscrupulous, proud, haughty, oppressive, revengeful, warlike, or unchaste, covetous, greedy of gain, ambitious of worldly greatness and display, slaves of capricious custom and devotees of popular though oftentimes wicked, demoralizing fashions? When we look at the great majority of those who have grown up under the eaves of the sanctuary, who have listened to the preaching of the ministers of the nominal church of Christ and observed many or all of its various prescribed forms, and find them little or no better than the outside skeptic or worldling who takes no stock in and pays no heed to any such things but rather despises them; find them no more just, upright, trustworthy, honorable, kind, charitable, merciful, forgiving, do not the results prove that such a church is more or less false to its trust, treasonable towards its Founder and Leader, corrupt in character or in administration, or at best either sadly untrue to what ought to be sacredly regarded as the first great, absolutely-essential object of its existence, or sadly incompetent in its efforts to attain that object? How poorly will many branches of the nominal Christian church of the past sixteen hundred years bear such a test as I have suggested! How poorly too

many of the churches of the present day, orthodox or heterodox, conservative or liberal! "'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true."

Another class of persons alluded to are disposed to admit the general propriety and soundness of my position and of my affirmation on this point but see no need of its being formally incorporated in a church platform or assented to as a distinct article of faith. It were better, such think, to take the matter for granted and assume that it is understood by all concerned. But the fact is it is not understood, certainly not practically if it be theoretically; and it is a matter of too vital importance to be left to such equivocal, uncertain use—to such neglect and forgetfulness as often exist. The history of the church from the beginning of its decadence to the present day shows, beyond all question or cavil, that only a lean, fragmentary minority of its actual members have themselves understood what the prime object of the church is and tried to live in accordance therewith. Having been left unexpressed it lost the prominence which properly belonged to it and at an early day the vast majority of confessors became either utterly ignorant of it or treated it with contempt. Look at the multitudinous sects or denominations of Christendom and see what is the state of things in this respect. With the exception of a few small unpopular ones it will found that they have no fixed landmarks, discipline, or testimony for the restraint of their members against war, capital punishment, compulsory litigation, political ambition

and intrigue, exorbitant wealth, financial speculation, sumptuous indulgence, artificial distinction, social domination, or any other anti-Christlike habit or custom of the world's civilization. These things are each and all deemed allowable for professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, only *in theory* they must not be abused. Their abuses are often eloquently deprecated and denounced but they continue nevertheless. For the reason that the things named are contrary to the laws of eternal order as they are to the example and teaching of Christ and tend naturally and inevitably to excess and mischief. Christ was pre-eminently humane, compassionate, and tender in respect to human life and welfare, even towards his enemies, and solemnly commands his disciples to be like him in this regard. But it is not in the nature of the customs and practices mentioned to produce this result but the opposite. They naturally and inevitably breed pride, imperiousness, resentment, vengeance, and stern disregard of human suffering. Christ was free from the spirit of worldly ambition, greed of gain, high position, social domination, and enjoined it upon those who bore his name to live as brethren not as masters, lording it over one another, declaring that under his rule "he who would be greatest among them should be servant of all." This can not be where there is striving and planning to gain official distinction, power and emolument, to acquire riches by financial craft and adventure, to pamper one's self and family with luxury, self indulgence, and excess of food, clothing, equipage, and dwelling-

houses, provoking the envy and hate of those around them ; or where there is tireless effort to rise to social superiority, lording it over workmen, servants, and less fortunate fellow-beings, and fattening on the homage of fawning parasites and sycophantic admirers. These various positions and attitudes are not Christlike, nor are they productive of Christlike fruits in those assuming them or in others, and no sophistry can make them otherwise than inimical and perverse of the spirit of Christ's religion.

And yet they prevail to a large extent in nearly every branch of the existing church, rendering its members so much like unbaptized, unregenerate worldlings that they can hardly be distinguished from them save only by a certain observance of religious rites, an outward profession of faith, a conventional pietism, or a sanctimonious air which are often mistaken for the graces and powers of the Christian life. The secret of this delusion is that moral Christlikeness is not regarded or felt to be, in any profound, vital sense, a matter of supreme moment in itself considered, or that it is the primal, peremptory object of the church to train, nurture, develop its members, dependents, and pupils of every name and degree to the possession and illustration of Christlikeness in their constant walk and conversation, in their habitual spirit, conduct, and character.

I hardly deem it necessary to quote passages from the New Testament to prove the proposition now in question. And yet it may not be out of

place to present a few as the sample of a great multitude of a similar import. First I offer some of Christ's own words, to wit : "I am the way, the truth and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." — *John* xiv. 6. "If any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me." — *Luke* ix. 23. "The disciple is not above his master ; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master." — *Ib.* vi. 40. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart." — *Matt.* xi. 29. "Whoever will be great among you let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant ; Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." — *Ib.* xx. 26–28. "I am the vine, ye are the branches ; He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." — *John* xv. 5. What do these passages teach but the duty of conformity to Christ ; of Christlikeness of spirit, conduct, and character.

What now is the Apostles' testimony on the same point ? Note the following : "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." — *Rom.* viii. 9. "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." — *1 Cor.* xii. 27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." — *Gal.* iii. 27. "Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." — *Phil.* ii. 5. "Hereunto were ye called ; because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." — *1 Pet.* ii. 21. "He that

saith he abideth in him, ought also to walk even as he walked." — *1 John* ii. 6. "Herein we perceive the love because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." — *1b.* iii. 16. "'Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." — *Ephs.* iv. 13. Let these citations suffice. Can any intelligent person doubt that it was the motive and purpose of the Master to reproduce as far as possible his own moral and spiritual image in the souls of his disciples? Or that to do the same work, to make men Christlike in spirit, character, and life, is the first essential, cardinal end and aim of the true Christian Church?

OBJECT 2. "To propagate the true, primitive religion of Christ by all reasonably available means as far and wide as possible; to convert the wayward and sinful from darkness to light and from iniquity to righteousness, ever seeking as its ultimate aim, in this particular, the regeneration, holiness, and happiness of the entire human race." The next thing for the Christian Church to do, after putting itself in order internally, according to the Gospel standard, is to enter upon and prosecute with all diligence and zeal, its external work. The world which Christ came to save lieth in ignorance, folly, error, and wickedness. It is to be converted; converted to him, to his religion, and to that order of life in true righteousness which he exemplified. His command was, "Go ye into all the world and preach

the Gospel to every creature." The duty thus enjoined was imposed to begin with upon his earliest Apostles and through them as instruments in founding the church it passed over to that body and thence to all the churches of Christendom. And those that are in any way loyal to their acknowledged leader accept the duty and seek to be faithful to the trust thus confided to them. And this duty is to be performed and this trust to be discharged through the ministry established by the church for the proclamation of Christ's word of truth and through its entire membership by a living example of Christlikeness before the world. The work involved cannot be done in a day or in an age, but the responsibility of attending to it is no less weighty and imperative on that account. It is a continuous, progressive work, and should not be permitted to lag or languish by the indolence or treachery of those entrusted with it. They should be on the alert at all times; they should be organized and equipped to carry it forward as fast and as far as possible wherever it is practicable; not forgetting for a moment the obligation resting upon them in this regard as disciples of him whom God raised up and sent into the world that through him the world might be enlightened, enfranchised, saved. To this end Christ labored when he was upon the earth, and, going hence, left the task for his church to take up and carry through to a glorious consummation, as the second cardinal object for which it was instituted and given a place in the providential order of the

world. As I have already suggested there are two ways by which this duty is to be discharged, by which the Christian religion is to be propagated, by which the church is to extend the influence and dominion of the Gospel to the ends of the earth,—by *word* and by *deed*; by the proclamation of the truth and by a living exemplification of the truth. And these two must be kept prominently in view and made to operate harmoniously with each other or the object to be attained will fail of realization to a proportionate extent. Preaching and practice must correspond and so supplement and aid each other or the contemplated and desired result will not be secured but seriously jeopardized.

I present a few sample testimonies from the sacred records for the purpose of showing that what I have declared to be a cardinal object of the Christian church was not only recognized as such by its early ministers but was a fundamental element of Christianity itself. And also to show that from the beginning that object was to be promoted and finally secured in the twofold way I have indicated—by word and deed, by the promulgation of Christian truth and by the power of example on the part of those by whom that truth had been received and in whom it had found incarnation. It was in the very nature of the religion of Christ to be a missionary religion; its vital spirit prompted continually to the extension of its influence and the enlargement of its empire among men, and the positive teachings of Jesus and of his evangelists and apostles were to the same effect, as can be easily

seen. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."—*John* iii. 16, 17. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."—*Ib.* vi. 33. "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candle-stick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—*Matt.* v. 13-16. "Go ye and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."—*Ib.* xxviii. 19, 20. "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth."—*Acts* xiii. 47. "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel."—*1 Cor.* i. 17. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant to all that I might gain the more."—*Ib.* ix. 16, 19. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that

ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." — 1 *Pet.* ii. 9, 12. "I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, * * * that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." — 1 *Tim.* ii. 1-4. "All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit: that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." — 2 *Cor.* v. 18, 19.

These and all similar passages, of which there are many scattered here and there through the New Testament, prove beyond all question the expansive and world-embracing nature of the religion of Christ and indicate the duty which it imposes upon his disciples, individually and in their church relations, of extending to the utmost its influence and power for good among men, and of helping in the work of bringing the whole world, all classes and conditions of men, in all lands and beneath all skies, under its holy and beneficent sway. To promote this sublime result by the wisest and most effective means must certainly be

one of the cardinal objects of a true Christian church.

So far as preaching is concerned, or the promulgating Christianity by the spoken *word*, all sections of the nominal church have been diligent and zealous enough, so far as regards their own respective theories and creeds; often, indeed, perverting the work of converting men to Christ and bringing them to the love and practice of righteousness into mere proselytism to a sect or party, often to a very narrow and bigoted one; one in which the belief or confession of certain dogmatic assumptions, or the observance of certain prescribed rites, or the pronouncing of some conventional shibboleth was made the chief thing—a matter of more importance manward and of surer acceptance Godward than obedience to the Christian law in the leading of a pure, noble, Christlike life. And not infrequently when the preaching has been comparatively and on the whole fairly good and for the most part above reproach, there has been lamentable failure in the matter of applying the truth proclaimed to daily conduct, to life in its various relations, and especially to the habits, practices, customs of general society and to the laws, institutions, and established policies of organized civil government; of towns, cities, provinces, states, and nations. The rebuke of the Master has been justified again and again in the history of the church; nay, has been of almost constant applicability, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord”; why claim to be under my leadership and tuition, “and yet do not

the things I say?" The worldling looks upon the lives and characters of nominal disciples of Christ and finds them so much like those of the so-called unregenerate, the non-professing masses, that he either comes to despise religion and all profession of religion, or, what is worse, accepts them formally, without inward renewal or moral transformation, for the sake of some personal advantage or possibly through a superstitious belief that thereby he will be insured salvation in a future state of being, without renouncing any of the sordid, selfish ambitions, projects, pleasures, indulgences, however unchristlike, of the present state. In either case the real object of the church is lost sight of and it is made to minister to human degradation and woe, and so to hinder the evangelization of the world instead of hastening it onward to its final completion. Hence the necessity of giving that object due prominence and assigning to it the importance which the nature of the case and the truth of Christianity demand.

DISCOURSE X.

EXPOSITION AND DEFENCE OF CARDINAL OBJECTS CONCLUDED.

“There should be no schism in the body; but the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”—1 *Cor.* xii. 25, 26.

“Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—*Rom.* xii. 2.

Resuming the general subject under consideration in my last discourse, to wit: The Cardinal Objects of the true Christian Church, I take up the next in order.

OBJECT 3. “To insure to all its orderly members, dependents, and attached probationers, the comforts and necessities of life, physical, intellectual, moral, social, and religious, without slavish and humiliating dependence on the part of any one upon the outside world.” Orderly members, dependents, etc., of the church are those who, of themselves or through their parents or guardians, are voluntarily connected with the body in the relations indicated and are therefore supposed to

be properly subject to its teachings, requirements, regulations, and generally established discipline, duly provided for the edification and governance of all concerned. If any refuse to be thus subject and assume an attitude of resistance to what is regarded as wholesome order, the obligation to care for such and furnish them with the means of a comfortable subsistence in the particulars indicated does not exist. They are out of place and should be allowed to go to their own company and find there all real wants supplied.

But what may be included in the catalogue of life's comforts and necessities in the several departments specified? A good home, food, clothing, shelter, care in sickness or infirmity, employment, education, moral training, religious culture, needful recreation, elevating companionship, salutary environment; whatever is requisite to the proper development of one's native capacities, to the supply of all his real needs, to the rendering of him useful, respectable, happy. This includes nothing for extravagant habits, for mere self-indulgence, for fashionable display, for demoralizing pleasure or anything of a similar nature. Slavish, humiliating dependence upon the outside world is that involving a surrender of personal independence, of the rights of conscience, or of any of the qualities and prerogatives of a manly or womanly character; thus not only degrading the subject but at the same time allowing the church to shirk some of its most sacred and vital responsibilities. It is that which is attended by some violation of princi-

ple, by conforming to false standards of morality, by catering to the vicious tastes and prejudices of the carnally minded, by consenting to popular abuses and evils, by neglecting to maintain an open testimony by word and deed against error, falsehood, iniquity of every sort, or in favor of what is true, right, good, as between man and man or as between man and God. It is that in which the church or any person representing it does not pay a full equivalent for benefits received, either from private individuals, charitable institutions. municipal, state, and national governments, or from any other source whatsoever.

Now in respect to this third declared object for which the Christian church exists, we find most of the larger and many of the smaller sections of Christendom deplorably delinquent. They are so conformed to this world in the common moralities, and so involved in the habits, practices, and fashions of general society and in the administration of political affairs, that they virtually ignore or defy the claims of the Gospel as of supreme validity and authority never to be overruled or remanded to a subordinate place in the conduct of life. They acquire and use property, trade and manage business, arrange educational and governmental interests, and conduct all secular concerns after the manner of this world and not according to the spirit and law of Christ. In their relations to the unfortunate, suffering, poor, and needy of their membership, they often turn them over to the unregenerate for care, sustenance, and comfort, or

huddle them together in charitable institutions where they rarely if ever come in contact with their fellow-associates in the church, and so lose much of that personal intercourse, interest, and sympathy, which contribute so largely to human welfare and happiness ; while the more prosperous and successful of their number luxuriate and revel in lavish expenditure and demoralizing self-indulgence. Worse than this, these so-called upper classes, masquerading as politicians, speculators, landlords, warriors, impose increasing burdens upon those of humbler rank in life, the toiling millions of the world, multiply beggars, paupers, orphans, widows, objects of pity and charity, the sorrowful victims of human selfishness, injustice, and violence, and thus increase the misery of mankind. Instead of all this, the better-conditioned of the church, if governed by the law of Christ, would use whatever superiority they might possess in any direction for the benefit of their less fortunate brethren, by providing remunerative employment for them, means of education and self-improvement, and a multitude of opportunities and privileges, with accompanying inducements to improve them, whereby ignorance, poverty, want, and woe would be greatly diminished if not altogether eliminated from the life and history of the church. It is time that these and other things of a like nature were taken into consideration and deemed of practical account by all who make profession of allegiance to Christ. It is time that a great reformation was begun in this regard.

But let me specify some of the means to be employed by which the particular object of the Christian church now in debate may be in good degree realized, or, at least, put in the way of realization at no distant day.

1. I observe in the first place that by a faithful discharge of the duty implied in the declared first object of a Christian church, the one now in discussion would be in large measure attained. Were the members and collateral subjects of the church trained sedulously to Christlikeness, they would be to a large extent insured "the comforts and necessities of life," and "relieved from degrading dependence on the outside world." So trained they would be industrious, frugal, temperate, self-supporting, as well as virtuous and devout. They would be saved from those habits and courses of conduct which are the fruitful sources of the evils and sufferings now so prevalent in general society; the evils and sufferings attendant upon ignorance, folly, self-indulgence, vice, and crime. Idlers, spendthrifts, dissolutes, debauchees, profligates of every sort, would not be bred under such a regimen and the sources of supply for all legitimate human need would be proportionally increased and replenished. The margin left for special charity would be greatly diminished.

2. By the faithful discharge of the same duty there would grow up in the church no extortioners, speculators, gamblers, oppressive landlords or managers of industry, pampered drones, mammonites, or other self-seeking tacticians, to take advantage

of the unsuspecting, to beguile the innocent, to outwit the simple-minded, to clutch the hard-earned fruits of honest toil from the hand of the toiler, or by any other means equally reprehensible obtain the rewards of other's productive energy and thus increase pauperism, vassalage, and the number of underlings and pensioners where only equality and brotherhood should prevail and every one have enough and to spare. Under such tuition superior talent, enterprise, wealth, would be sacredly devoted to the general welfare and prosperity, to the elevation of the weaker and less fortunate, to the provision of means and opportunities of education and self-help, to social improvements and public benefits, to benevolent institutions and humanitarian causes, and to the Christianization of the world. So would much poverty and dependence be provided against, and the third great object of the church be effectively promoted.

3. But with all these preventives and provisions, special benevolences and charities will sometimes be needed, and must in loyalty to Christ be furnished. Through the uncontrollable forces of nature, human weakness, ignorance, and folly, and the wickedness and false ambition of men in high and commanding positions, will misfortune and misery come, even to the most innocent and worthy. Hurricanes, floods, fires, famine, pestilence, ill-health, persecution, war, will sometimes prevail, sweeping away hard-earned gains, home, means of self-subsistence, productive ability, and other sources of comfort and supply, rendering one for the time

being, if not permanently, dependent upon others for the satisfaction of all material needs and possibly of higher needs as well. The true church will make ample provision for such emergencies, which are liable to occur at any moment and perhaps where least expected. Systematic methods of relief by established institutions and official agents charged with the duty of acting promptly in needed cases must be made a part of the church equipment, to be supplemented, when required to meet special demands, by willing and cheerful personal service and freely-given pecuniary contributions, so that it may be said as was said of the church at the day of Pentecost, "Neither was there any among them that lacked." Inattention to these things by reason of thoughtlessness, cupidity, or want of sympathy and fellow-feeling for those who need and suffer, is utterly inexcusable in a body calling itself a Christian church, and brands it false to its high profession, and oblivious to one of the essential cardinal objects for which the church was instituted or by which it is to prove itself worthy a place in the divine plan for the redemption of the world.

Will it be said that my views of the duty of the church in the matter under consideration are extreme and unreasonable? But are they not grounded in the very nature of Christianity and justified by the New Testament record of what transpired in the beginning? Look at Jesus, the great Head of the church and the model of human character and conduct. From the meagre data given us of his common life among men we may

warrantably infer that his parents belonged to the middle class of Jewish society and were dependent upon their productive labor and wise economy for their daily bread, that he was trained to self-sustaining industry as the son of a carpenter and to simple frugal habits of personal and domestic concern, and that he shared and profited by the educational advantages accorded in his day to children and youth of the common people. For ten years, more or less, he lived as became one of his rank and calling. That he accumulated some property may be presumed from Paul's words, "Though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be made rich." Though this statement had a spiritual significance as including his entire benevolence and self-sacrifice it quite likely had its correspondence in the facts of his common life; the greater including the less. Moreover, when Jesus entered upon his ministry and looked about him for helpers in executing the work given him to do, he selected men of the same class with himself, accustomed to the same general regimen in respects to home training, education, etc. They left their ordinary pursuits to follow him and promulgate his gospel, multiplying converts as the fruit of their labors. All together, Master, Apostles, believers of various grade, contributed of their pecuniary means to the common treasury, of which Judas seems to have had charge, for the supply of the common necessities, the advancement of the cause in which they were engaged, and the relief of the poor.

Thus it was while Christ was yet upon the earth. After he passed into heaven, when the great Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place as recorded in the second, third, and fourth chapters of the book of Acts, there was a corresponding outpouring of temporal goods to insure the necessities and comforts of life to all of the growing household of faith. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things that he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every man according as he had need."—*Acts*. iv. 32, 34, 35. Not long after a board of seven responsible persons, called deacons, was constituted to superintend the disposal of these funds in a regular, systematic, judicious manner, so that no one should be left to suffer or have cause of complaint.

Now while the precise form which the noble generosity and fraternal helpfulness of the primitive church took on at the outset may not be and is not deemed obligatory upon those who assume to be disciples of the same Master in subsequent times, yet beyond all doubt the spirit which prompted that form and secured the beneficent results of it is forever obligatory and inviolable, and clearly indicates the duty of all churches and

of all church members in all periods of human history. It is the spirit of the Master, the spirit of Christianity, and if ignored, neglected, or set at defiance, the Master himself is dishonored in the house of His pretended friends and Christianity is discredited and robbed of its crowning glory. Let the church as it now is be duly advised and admonished in regard to this matter, and wherein it is at fault concerning it may it be called back to its duty and prove itself a worthy representative of the first body of believers and its immediate successor, the church of the apostolic age. So shall Christ be duly exalted, the church be purified, and God be glorified.

OBJECT 4. "To exemplify within the pale of its own membership a model form of personal and social life in advance of existing civilization, as a type and harbinger of the divine order of human society that is to be, when men, under the reign of Christ, shall dwell together in brotherhood and peace." Some will deny, others doubt, and many condemn this statement, as either untrue, incredible, or greatly exaggerated. In view of the prevailing sentiment of the church and of general society, as it now is and has been for many centuries, this is not to be wondered at. But I shall not be deterred thereby from defending my own profound conviction that the position assumed is well taken. Let me explain and define the meaning of my proposition.

What the true church is to exemplify in the particulars named is to be done *within its own*

pale, among those who profess to follow Christ, not among outsiders, who acknowledge no allegiance to him. It may be admitted that members of the church are to illustrate a high order of personal life but are in no wise bound to show forth a corresponding type of social life, except in a very narrow, exclusive sense; not as separate from and radically above the existing social state. But I insist upon this point as well as the other, to wit: that it is a cardinal object of the true church to exemplify a model form of associated life,—not a perfect order of society at once but a radically better one than now exists, preparing the way and leading to the divine society of the future; a form or order that can and will be imitated in its more important aspects by sundry voluntary associations, and approximately by general civil society, as its excellences come to be understood and appreciated. Thus it will keep in advance of the world's so-called civilization, constantly stimulating and elevating it, and working at length its thorough Christianization.

If this was not the designed object of the church in this particular, what was it? Was it to stand in no other relation to society at large than that of a modifying component element of it, one of its constituent parts, in no wise separate from and exalted above it? Was it to be a *follower* in the march of human progress, or a simple sharer of the benefits thereof, or a co-ordinate agency operating in common with others to produce it? On either of these suppositions the church is in

no proper sense a divinely appointed instrumentality for the redemption of the world, and Christianity is no longer worthy of reverence and love as the power of God unto human salvation. Then society is its own saviour and civilization is itself of supreme moral importance, to which the church and Christianity are but tributary benefactors. Then the church has no right to set up a standard of righteousness, personal or social, even for its own adherents, absolutely higher than that of existing society to which it is confessedly subordinate; and certainly none which shall require its subjects, on account of conscientious scruples, not to participate in long-established and popular social customs and practices, or in governments founded upon the will of the majority, however idolatrous, oppressive, warlike they may be. Its proper mission is to float upon the tide of the world's prevailing life, or, at most and best, to modulate its flow by occasional suggestion or general good influence which has, however, no inherent authority or controlling power. And Christianity, which the church is supposed to represent, is robbed of its supremacy in the realm of morals and religion, and is to be counted as but one out of many forces that make for righteousness and the coming in of the kingdom of heaven. It may be, according to some theologies, of intrinsic and imperishable value as a means of preparing souls for the next world, but is of subordinate worth as an instrumentality for enlightening, reforming, saving them in the present one. Under this supposed view of the relation of Chris-

tianity and the church to social life and to civil government, which seems to be practically the common view, it is not strange that many who have lost all dread of divine vengeance after death come to hold both in derision and scornfully claim that they have "played out," and that science, literature, politics, and war are after all the sources whence must come the progress of the race and the final reign of order, equity, brotherhood, harmony. Alas, that the church in its dominant sections should give cause for such animadversion and sneering satire. For such is the case, in that it has been so long busy in making professedly Christian persecutors, warriors, and war-chaplains, lordlings, courtiers, mammonites, politicians, worldlings of a manifold variety, instead of bringing its members to lead a Christlike life and to illustrate a Christianized form of society among themselves and before an unregenerate world.

The common sense of intelligent people ought to show them that if the distinctive righteousness set forth in the New Testament has any radical excellence it must be not only an individual righteousness but a social righteousness also, to be taught and exemplified by the church as an organized body of Christian disciples. The notion that Christians as individuals acting in the customary affairs of private life are to keep the two great commandments, to observe the golden rule and all those precepts which solemnly enjoin humility, forbearance, kindness, forgiveness of injuries, and love of enemies as well as friends, while, as asso-

ciates in business and civil affairs, as constituents, representatives, and managers of organized society they may be guilty of pride, selfishness, injustice, hatred, and revenge, and commit the darkest deeds of violence, cruelty, oppression, and bloodshed, in the name of church or state, of humanity or civilization, is as preposterous and absurd as it is abominable. What is the Christian church but a body of persons voluntarily united under the avowed leadership of Jesus Christ, not only to profess and to promulgate his religion but to practice it in all the concerns and relations of life? Those persons claim to have been born again, to be new creatures in Christ, to be led by his spirit, and to be the lights, guides, exemplars of mankind. Shall they make this claim good? Common sense and common honesty alike affirm that they ought to do so or abandon it forever. The early church made good this claim, if we can trust history; and the church of the future will do the same and do it more perfectly, if we can trust prophecy.

That the Scriptures require, command, make imperative, this practical application of Christian ideas, principles, precepts, and the Christian spirit to the practical affairs of life, to all human interests and relations, without exception, modification or limitation, is as certain and indisputable as that they teach anything of a moral and spiritual nature; and to quote all the passages that plainly support this view would be to transfer to these pages most of the prescriptive lessons of the four Gospels, the

Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles following ; a task from which I will be excused, referring my readers in lieu thereof to the original sources of knowledge on this point where they will find my affirmation concerning this matter unequivocally attested and substantiated. I pass therefore to —

OBJECT 5. “To demonstrate, by practical righteousness in all human relations and affairs, the transcendent excellence of pure Christianity over all religions, philosophies, and moral systems known to men, and thus continually approximate the perfect realization of the Master’s prayer : ‘Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’” This may be regarded as a summary of all the previously named objects of the Christian church, with a distinct recognition of the grand result of which they are prophetic, to which they are tributary, and in which they find complete and glorious fulfillment. This attainment of a divine kingdom on earth, and of the actual supremacy of the divine will in the present state of existence, detracts nothing from the revealed glory of immortal life and blessedness in heaven. It is in happy accord with it—a constituent part of that sublimely beneficent plan of universal holiness and happiness which the infinite Wisdom and Love designed to work out under his beneficent rule by the mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ ; begun indeed in time and finding a partial realization on this world’s arena, but reaching its ultimate in other and higher realms of being, where imperfection shall rise into perfection, and where the mortal shall put on immortality.

Christ declared himself to be the light of the world. He also declared his disciples, as a body of believers in him, to be, in a subordinate sense, the same. But they were so only as they exemplified the truth and righteousness which he exemplified. He taught his followers to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and he also, by implication, taught them to live and act accordingly. They were not to pray that earth might be a heaven of love, unity, concord, happiness, and then so conduct themselves as to render it a hell; a place of discord, confusion, wrath, and woe. Nor, under pretext of getting into heaven hereafter, were they to neglect laboring to make a heaven here; much less approve, sanction, and participate in those things—selfishness, oppression, covetousness, licentiousness, violence, persecution, bloodshed, and war—which constitute the essential elements and forces of inferno. Rather did he teach that in order to secure a heaven hereafter one must cherish a heavenly spirit here, and do what he may to build up a kingdom of heaven on the earth. The more a religion is worth for bettering this world, the more is it worth for gaining blessedness in the world to come.

Now, whether the Christian religion is superior to its many rivals or competitors; better than any other religion, than any form of philosophy, than any literary, scientific, or ethical system, than any political or civil expedients or modes of government, or not, is to be determined by its fruits; by

its natural, legitimate effect upon the characters and lives of its adherents, by the moral and spiritual attainment of those who have put themselves most completely under its guidance and inspiration. That there is good in many other religions, philosophies, etc., I do not deny; that they have all had noble and praiseworthy exponents or disciples, I cheerfully allow; that they have exerted a beneficent and salutary influence upon the world of mankind, I will not question. But that Christianity excels them each and all in these particulars, I claim, and deem myself able to make the claim good. Granting that much mischief has been done in the world by a corrupted and perverted Christianity; granting that men in vast multitudes, professing to be followers of Jesus, have not only violated the dictates of common morality, but been sometimes monsters of iniquity; granting that the nominal Christian church has often sanctioned and sanctified popular evils and abominations, and stood in the way of reform and progress; yet do I affirm, without fear of refutation, that the religion of Christ is *par excellence* "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The nature of that religion, its genius, its fundamental principles, its vital spirit, are a guaranty of most purifying and ennobling results, if allowed controlling sway, in life and character, in social transformations, in the progress of mankind. Moreover, Christ was the personification of his religion. In him we see its

perfect fruits, and what can be better, nobler, diviner? And all down through the Christian centuries the more men and women have lived by the Gospel, or put the Gospel into their lives, the more like Jesus have they become, the more fully have they illustrated all the powers and graces of a manly and womanly character, the more completely have they been imaged after the all-perfect God. The more, too, have such men and women been interested and active in the welfare and happiness of their fellowmen, and in those humanitarian, beneficent, and progressive causes and movements which are calculated to elevate, enlighten, regenerate, and save the sinful and sorrowing of the world. And, furthermore, the church, the so-called Christian church, notwithstanding its apostasy and many shortcomings, has been the one great agency by which immorality and wickedness have been held in check and virtue and godliness promoted; by which the divine purpose has been carried forward toward its millennial fulfillment. If such important, blessed results can be accomplished by a demoralized, corrupt church, entering but partially into the mind and work of Christ, what might not be done in the same direction and behalf for man's redemption and God's glory by a thoroughly illumined, faithful, consecrated, inspired one? Such an one as in some not far distant day, I trust, shall, by a radical regeneration, have a place in the world. Such a church will prove the soundness of my view in declaring the fifth grand object of a true body of Christ; will dem-

onstrate, by practical righteousness in all human concerns, the superiority of pure Christianity to all other religions, philosophies, and moral systems, and continually approximate the realization of the divine purpose in sending Jesus into the world.

I bring this discourse to a close, and with it the discussion of the subject under consideration, with a few pertinent observations. (1) That these conclusions regarding the essential cardinal objects of the true Christian church are alike worthy of the loftiest aspirations of the human soul, honorable to Jesus Christ, and glorifying to the Infinite Father. (2) That they are fully sanctioned and attested by reason and Scripture. (3) That any others radically contrary or inferior to them would render the church worthy of reprehension, if not of contempt. (4) That they have been too generally overlooked, ignored, or belittled, by the mass of professing Christians for more than fifteen hundred years. (5) That in the church of the future they ought to be made specially prominent as indispensable planks of the ecclesiastical platform, and perpetually magnified and proclaimed as elements of religious progress and stimulants to Christian endeavor and fidelity.

Let no one who is persuaded of the validity of these observations be misled by the thought that the specified objects for which the church is established can be sufficiently understood by inference or implication without solemn declaration, affirmation, and proclamation, both in the standards of faith and in the formal acknowledgment

of confessors. And may the great Head of the church guide, inspire, and strengthen his loyal subjects to be faithful in this as in all other Christian duties, to the end that they may labor effectively for his cause, and for the coming of his kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy.

DISCOURSE XI.

EXPOSITION OF THEOLOGICAL FAITH. PART I.

"One God, the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—*Eph.* iv. 6.

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion * * * and to an innumerable company of angels, * * * and to the Spirits of just men made perfect."—*Heb.* xii. 22. 23.

"Every one shall give account of himself to God."—*Rom.* xiv. 12.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*Gal.* vi. 7.

"He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."—*1 Cor.* xv. 25.

Having considered at sufficient length in the two preceding discourses what I have come to regard as the predominating cardinal objects for which the true Christian church exists, to be recognized and acknowledged by all the faithful followers of its great Founder and Leader, I now proceed to an exposition of the several articles or subdivisions of the second section of my propounded creed or platform, to wit :

II. THEOLOGICAL FAITH OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I. The Divine Moral Order of the World.

(I.) "There is one and but one God, who is self-existent, infinite, all-perfect; an omni-present Spirit, and not a corporeal, localized organism;

permeating boundless space and duration, and manifestable to finite intelligences at His own pleasure as to time, place, manner, and extent."

This is the God whom Jesus designates as "The Father," and of whom the Apostle Paul declares to be "above all, and through all, and in you all," "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." He is one, and only one. No form of plurality must be ascribed to Him. Hence the popular doctrine of the Trinity, however stated, is inadmissible. He is self-existent, from eternity to eternity, needing no creator or prior cause; He being the Great First Cause. He is all-sufficient in Himself and absolutely independent. He is above all fate, necessity, or other modes of existence—the inherent Origin, Force, Life, Intelligence, Will, Wisdom, and Goodness of universal being. He is infinite in all the attributes, properties, and qualities of His Deific nature; in extension, duration, and operation; in power, wisdom, and love; in everything that makes Him God. No limitation whatever must be imputed to Him, save only sin, error, or essential contradiction of His own intrinsic character or moral order. He is all-perfect in His essential nature, as he is also in the qualities and manifestations of his intellectual and moral capability—perfect in all conceivable respects. No fault or incompleteness exists in Him; in affection, thought, will, purpose, act, or accomplishment.

He is a Spirit, *the* Spirit, all-pervading, all-embracing, immanent in all things, throughout immen-

sity ; without corporeal, organic form, incapable of localization or exclusion from any soul, from any part of the vast empire of being, except in an accommodated or metaphorical sense. He is the one vital force animating all worlds and all finite natures. He has neither center nor circumference. Whatever He is at one point of time or space, He is at all points, *ad infinitum*. He can manifest himself or not, wherever, whenever, and to whomsoever He will, adapting His operations to the needs of all subordinate creatures, from the lowliest human soul on earth to the loftiest archangel in heaven—from the simple meeting of two or three in Christ's name in some humble cottage, to the vast assemblage of celestial hosts amid the splendors of paradise. But the sublimest of these manifestations are not infinite, because made to finite intelligences, and the finite cannot apprehend infinity, but only such portions thereof as its development renders it capable of. Every part of the measureless immensity of being is instinct with God's presence, and He reveals Himself at each and every conceivable point as He will ; in whom, through whom, and to whom He will. This is more fully set forth in the next article.

(2.) "God possesses inherently all the attributes of self-conscious mental and moral personality throughout the whole vast sphere of His omnipresence, and is communicable to and with all ingenuous, receptive minds by His Holy Spirit dwelling in and inspiring them. Hence, manifold

divine disclosures and revelations have been made to men through the successive periods of human history, in some measure to the race generally, but specifically, and with marked demonstrations of reality and power, to and through eminent personages or mediators, of whom Jesus of Nazareth was chief."

These two articles, or declarations of faith—the latter complementing the former—clearly avoid and preclude certain great and pernicious errors of both past and present theology, among which I name the following: That God is a plurality of persons; that He is in any respect imperfect or subject to the necessities of a finite nature; that He is an organic body, dwelling chiefly, if not exclusively, in some grand, central locality of the universe, save as He journeys here and there on some special mission about His vast dominion; that He is identical with the aggregate of entities called Nature; that He is an unconscious plexus of primal forces, laws, and principles, operating with a blind infallibility; that because He has no bodily organism, He can have no mental and moral personality; that if He have a mental and moral personality, it must be a concentered and localized one, not omni-present and omni-active at every point of boundless time and space; that He is an incommunicable being, and cannot be known or apprehended by finite natures except through instinct, intuition, reason, secondary causes or intermediate spiritual agencies; that the Holy Ghost is a distinct divine personality in

the Godhead, not a portion or manifestation of the Infinite Spirit operating as He pleases for the accomplishment of His great all-comprehending purpose; that if divine communications, revelations, and inspirations have been given to men they must all be deemed equally clear, complete, and authoritative, regardless of imperfect human conditions; and, finally, that because God was in Christ Jesus to the highest, fullest pre-eminence spiritually possible, He must have been in him to infinity; so that, outside of Christ, the Father was not the same all-perfect God He had been from an unbegun eternity, but was wholly incarnate in the Nazarene. These and kindred theological fallacies are partly pseudo-Christian, partly pseudo-philosophical, and partly pseudo-pantheistic, but are all decidedly repugnant to pure Christianity. They are, therefore, to be excluded from the platform of the renovated church of Christ. And being so excluded, its members and adherents are intrenched behind ramparts impregnable to the assaults of the combined squadrons of bigotry, credulity, superstition, scientific scepticism, and irreligious philosophy. The two articles of faith, as I have stated and expounded them, furnish all needful security against such foes of truth and righteousness; against a host of sophistries jeopardous to human good and happiness.

The substantial truth of the articles under notice is assumed, where it is not explicitly taught, throughout the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and is conclusively demonstrable from the funda-

mental principles of moral and spiritual philosophy as interpreted by the light of reason. But it is not so much my present purpose to establish by logical processes the several articles and clauses of my creed as it is to present them in definite and apprehensible form, with such accompanying explanation and elucidation as are necessary to have them clearly and unmistakably understood by the ingenuous, truth-loving, reverent mind and heart. Having done this, as I believe, as far as I have gone, I pass on to the next article.

(3.) "There is a vast realm of immaterial and immortal existence insphering and comprehending the present state of being, wherein dwelleth an innumerable company of angels and spirits of multiform grade and character, sometimes manifestable to kindred spirits dwelling in the flesh; and all the children of men from the beginning to the end of time are, by nature and Providence, destined through a resurrectional process to enter that realm, and occupy a place there on higher or lower levels of attainment forevermore."

The terms in which this article is expressed may be defined and explained thus: "Realm of spiritual and immortal existence;"—one as real as this on earth; in which all substances, forms, and entities, although real, are not "of the earth, earthy," and subject to physical death, but imponderable and ethereal; and where the inhabitants in unbroken self-consciousness experience no mortal ills or disabilities incident to the flesh. "An innumerable company of angels and spirits;"—

countless hosts of intelligent beings. "Of multi-form grade and character;" — high and holy angels, low and unholy spirits, souls of every conceivable rank and stage of moral development, associated according to the attractions of spiritual affinity, and acting together in perfect freedom, yet as subjects of divine law, order, and discipline. "Sometimes, under favorable conditions, manifestable to other spirits dwelling in the flesh;" — as declared through the Old and New Testaments, the sacred books and traditions of all nations, and attested by abundant evidence derived from all ages of human history, not excepting our own. "All the children of men from the beginning to the end of time are destined * * * to enter that realm;" that is, are designed for and constitutionally made capable of it. "Through a resurrectional process;" — which separates the immaterial from the material nature of man, the spirit from the body, investing the former in an appropriate form or presence clearly recognizable by the inward vision, agreeably to the Apostle's saying, "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," and preparing it for the new conditions upon which it enters, and for all subsequent progressive unfoldings. "To dwell therein on higher or lower levels of attainment and progress," according to their mental and moral fitness for the time being, and their degree of development at any period of their ever-continuing existence. [For more ample exposition, Scriptural proofs, etc., See Discourses XII, XIII, XV, XVI, Vol. I.]

This article avoids and precludes, as one may readily see, the following prevalent mischievous errors, to wit: That there is in man no conscious, intelligent human soul separable from the physical organism; that there is no conscious state of existence for men after the event called death; that the resurrection spoken of in the Scriptures must relate to, or at least include, the reanimation of the fleshly frame, raised from the grave or gathered from the elements by miraculous power and translated to the unseen world, and there put in possession of its former tenant—body and soul being thus reunited for all eternity; that the spiritual and immortal nature of man was first made known and believed as a part of the Christian revelation; that existence in the future state is a vague, indefinite, shadowy form of being, not one of positive verities analogous to those of the present life; that no angels, spirits, or departed human souls have ever manifested themselves to mankind, but that such alleged occurrences are sheer myths, fabrications, illusions, or subjective visions of abnormal minds; that if they ever do take place, those recorded in the Bible are the only reliable ones, all others being attributable to Satan, or to some of his subordinates; that there are only two distinctive conditions of being after death—one of happiness, called heaven, the other of misery, called hell, with no proper individual moral agency, and no methods of enlightenment, reformation, and progress whereby the unworthy and vile may become pure and holy; that the Supreme First

Cause is so abstract and distant from finite natures that He reaches them and actuates them, and governs them only through intermediate angels or demigods, who carry on the affairs of the universe, constituting the only deities whom mankind need to recognize; that Modern Spiritualism is a radically new religion, superseding all preceding ones, even Christianity itself, and should receive the encouragement, support, and homage of all mankind as God's last, divinest, most effective instrumentality for bringing in His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. All these and many similar errors, diverse, incongruous, heterogeneous as they are, are disparagements, caricatures, denials, or nullifications of Christianity, and, if allowed to shape the belief or the policy of any proposed church of the new Reformation, would fatally embarrass, and ultimately destroy it. They are, therefore, to be provided against, discountenanced, and interdicted by all those who would aid in the establishment of such a church.

(4.) "All mankind are by nature moral agents, possessing greatly diversified degrees of original capacity and acquired talent, and are, therefore, proper subjects of moral law, invested with more or less of personal responsibility, and amenable alike to discipline, and to punishment or reward in whatever state of being or stage of development they may be."

This article of my creed needs little explanation or elucidation. It simply affirms that human beings are within certain limits capable of perceiv-

ing moral distinctions, of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil, and of choosing one or the other as the controlling element of their lives. It does not mean that they are so in infancy and early childhood, or when afflicted with idiocy, insanity, or any other abnormal impairment of their natural capacities, but only when in the legitimate possession and exercise of their inherent faculties and possibilities. Moreover, it does not impose upon any one or all unlimited accountability, but admits of gradations thereof, based upon capacity, knowledge, opportunity. According to these is one to be judged and treated as a subject of moral law, of healthful discipline, of praise or blame, and of punishment or reward. And this is true in all worlds, in all states of being, from eternity to eternity, now and forevermore.

All this is taken for granted and acted upon throughout the Old and New Testament. Every precept, every commandment, every warning against iniquity, every exhortation to virtue and piety, has this for a foundation, and so evident is it to the common moral sense and practical judgment of men everywhere that it enters into and distinguishes every form of domestic, social, and civil life. All jurisprudence, all disciplinary restraint, all reproof and condemnation of guilt, and all approval and commendation of fidelity and righteousness imply it. It, therefore, needs no verification or defence at the bar of human intelligence and judgment. I only pause to note a few quib-

bles, sophisms, and fallacies which becloud and bewilder some minds concerning it.

If this article, or the truth in it, be so obvious and unquestionable, some one may say, Why make so much account of it? Why insist upon it? Why insert it in a statement of faith, and ask people to subscribe to it? I reply, because it is a fundamental matter; because it is a foundation stone of personal character, of social order, of civil government, of all human prosperity and happiness; and so a proper basis upon which to erect the true Christian church. Because, also, there are abroad in the world certain errors or falsities in relation to the involved subject, sustained and promulgated with such fascinating but specious sophistries that they are calculated to attract, confuse, mislead, and lure to evil ways the indifferent, unsuspecting, thoughtless, and morally weak, working great harm to them, and through them, to the world. There is, for instance, the old doctrine of divine foreordination, which made every thought and act of every man a fixed certainty of his existence; the doctrine of total depravity, which taught that the entire human race were rendered incapable of any good, and prone to evil till rescued by the miraculous grace of God; the more modern idea that man is a creature of circumstances, and can in no respect do otherwise than as outside forces compel him; that evil is not *per se* evil, but rudimental good; that "whatever is, is right," in inexcusable perversion of Pope's words, thus confounding all moral distinctions, and making nonsense and

folly of every command of God, of every precept of Christ, of every appeal of the champion of truth and righteousness. None of these errors could be endorsed or allowed to shape life and character by any one without dangerous demoralization. They naturally and inevitably stultify, palsy, or vitiate that sense of responsibility which is vital to the healthy development of the Christian character and to the healthy activity of the Christian church. They are, therefore, to be inhibited from the beginning by such an affirmation of the opposite truths as are comprised in the article under notice.

(5.) "There is a righteous and perfect divine retribution for all moral agents wherever existing, by which God, in the administration of His divine government, causes every one, sooner or later, to experience such enjoyment or suffering as is most just, merciful, and salutary; always aiming therein at the highest and most durable individual, social, and universal good for both time and eternity."

The retribution here asserted consists of that measure of gain or loss, of pleasure or pain, which expresses the absolute right or wrong of every exercise of human energy involving moral considerations. It is not to be confounded with those natural effects of wrong-doing which often fall on offspring or other innocent related parties as heavily as on the guilty. It is not to be confounded with human penalties of any sort often so inappropriate, inequitable, and injurious, both to the subject and to the public weal. It is a strictly divine

visitation, provided for and made sure by the ordinations of a perfectly wise, just, merciful, loving God, under the workings of a perfectly devised and administered moral government, to the end of securing at length a perfectly ordered, harmonious, happy world and universe. It contemplates and makes effective, sooner or later, the reformation of the offender, while sustaining the supremacy and majesty of the eternal law of righteousness. As related to human beings, its execution begins in this world, but extends into the world to come, operating there, as here and everywhere, not to recompense God for any benefit derived from Him or for any injury done to Him; not to display the divine sovereignty and power, but absolutely and solely to promote the virtue, holiness, and happiness of each individual soul involved, and of the whole vast realm of conscious being.

The article in question also avoids and precludes certain grave and pernicious errors, among which are the following: That the rewards and punishments administered by men upon their fellow-men, as in the family, in the school, in the governments of towns, cities, states, and nations, are necessarily divine, and, according to the order of God's Providence,—being often deplorably partial, cruel, and unjust; that all natural consequences of human conduct are essentially retributory; that recompense for well or ill-doing comes from a pleased or offended Deity; that it is designed to satisfy the divine justice without regard to the divine mercy; that simple suffering can be in any

case a satisfaction for sin, and can be borne by an innocent substitute as well as by the guilty, as the dogma of vicarious atonement implies; that the penal inflictions of the future world have no intentional reformatory purpose or power; and that there can be, and is to be, under the divine economy, everlasting punishment for certain of the human race, either in the form of unending misery or of utter annihilation. These and kindred errors are so false as deductions of moral philosophy, so repugnant to an enlightened understanding, so derogatory to the divine perfections, so opposed to Scripture, and so pernicious withal, that, if admitted into the organic plan of an ecclesiastical body and made to shape its testimony and its policy, it would seriously debase its membership and limit its power of virtue, usefulness, and redemption in the world. They so degrade and pervert the character of the Heavenly Father as to rob Him of His parental attributes, and render Him unworthy of supreme homage and filial imitation, making Him an example of vindictiveness, implacability, cruelty, and even malevolence, to be contemplated only with revulsion and abhorrence. The logical and moral fruits of such fallacies are bigotry, intolerance, persecution, revengefulness, hatred of enemies, and kindred immoralities, as repugnant to the principles and spirit of the religion of Christ as they are to the finer instincts of the human heart. They must, therefore, be disallowed and made forever impossible in a true Christian church by incorporating in its platform the fifth article of my proposed standard of faith.

(6.) "Moral and spiritual regeneration by a rising out of animal selfishness and sinful indulgence into the love of heavenly principles — of man and God — as the supreme motive and impulse in life, is absolutely necessary to the deliverance of every human soul from the power of evil, and its attainment of Christlike holiness and happiness, in this or any possible state of existence."

This article implies, and virtually teaches, that man is naturally, and to begin with, chiefly an animal, however mentally, morally, and spiritually capacitated; that his animal propensities and passions, which are inherently selfish and fleshly, at first dominate and actuate him; and that, to enable him to attain and illustrate the best of which he is capable, there must be a change of controlling forces, a change from the animal and selfish predominance to the moral and spiritual, corresponding to the change from the embryonic to the independent life of the infant child, and so properly called "the new birth." And this implies, not a transformation of the primary constitution of a human being, but a transference of his vital consciousness from the lower to the higher nature within him, with a corresponding passing over of the control of his life and character from the animal propensities and passions to the impulses, aspirations, hopes, and loves that characterize him as a spiritual being — a son of God, and heir of immortality; a passing over from that condition in which he is actuated by fleshly appetites and self-seeking ambitions to that loftier

condition in which love of truth and good, of God and man, become supreme in his thought and conduct, and in which he takes on more and more with his advancing years the attributes and qualities of the infinite perfection. The importance of this doctrine of regeneration may be seen in the fact that no human soul can be saved, or attain to its noblest and its best, so long as it is under the sway of carnal, selfish propensities and ambitions, but only when it rises into the realm of the eternal verities, is animated by its inherent divine energies, and thereby brought into touch with, and under the guidance and inspiration of, the powers of the world to come.

This article, moreover, avoids and precludes certain vicious errors :— That man was radically changed from good to evil by Adam's sin; that, by the new birth, he is as radically changed from total depravity to holiness of heart and life; that regeneration is wrought by miraculous interposition, and not by the quickening of the inherent capabilities of the soul through human agency co-operating with the normal action of the Holy Spirit; that it is somehow inseparably connected with water baptism; that it consists in mere change of belief, in giving up one set of opinions for another, presumably truer and better, or in a change of religious fellowship—going from one sect or church to another; and, finally, that it is merely a matter of education, of the formation of good habits, of the leading of an exemplary outward life before the world, without regard to the

impulses, desires, emotions, aspirations of the heart, out of which are the issues of life, or to the influences, inspirations, ministries of the spiritual world above, and the helping grace of Him "from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift." Against such misapprehensions, illusions, and deceits, a true church of Christ would be fully protected by the article before us. [See Vol. I, Discourses XVIII-XX.

(7.) "It is divinely ordained that, under the mediatorial reign of Christ, good will finally triumph over all evil in the world of humanity, righteousness and peace everywhere prevail, and 'God be all in all.' "

By "the mediatorial reign of Christ" in this declaration is meant that feature of the divine order of the universe, or that manifestation of the over-ruling Providence of God, which is often termed *the Christian Dispensation*—that great movement in human history, imperfectly represented by the nominal church, which started under the leadership of Jesus of Nazareth some 1900 years ago, in Palestine, of which he, through his teachings, life, and character, has, during the intervening ages, been the inspiration and guiding star; and by which he, under some high commission from the King of kings, was qualified, empowered, and authorized to be a medium of communication between God and man for the uplifting and redemption of the entire human race. The *good* that is to triumph over all evil includes everything holy, pure, divine; all that makes for order, righteousness, peace, happiness;

while evil represents the opposite, whatever is in itself wrong and vile, and makes for disorder, immorality, degradation, misery. Good and evil, as thus defined, are in natural moral antagonism to each other, and have been in conflict for the mastery of individual souls and of the world ever since man appeared upon the earth. And the conflict is to go on in this and in the future state of being, wherever man is found, good ever advancing, evil ever retreating, until at length good shall gain complete and universal victory. Then, as the result, shall righteousness and peace prevail—the righteousness and peace of Christ's Gospel—and God shall indeed be “all in all;” not in the theological sense of omni-presence as a natural attribute of Deity, but in the sense of spiritual unity, made real to human faith and consciousness according to the prayer of Jesus, “As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;” and to the saying of John, “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” So shall the mission of Christ be fulfilled, his work be consummated, and his name be forever glorified.

A few errors excluded from the category of true Christian beliefs and set at naught by this article may be specified, to wit:—That this mortal life is the sole probationary period for man, and affords his only chance for gaining heaven; that at death every man's destiny is fixed for all the eternity to come; that while the good may grow better and the bad worse in the future state, no one can turn from bad to good, or in any case reform his evil

ways ; that no moral agencies are there employed to save lost souls ; that Christ, as Teacher, Guide, Mediator, is of no account beyond the boundaries of time ; that he has no just claim to the pre-eminence given him in the capacity indicated even in this world, all progress and happiness here and hereafter being attained by the invincible necessity of nature and nature's laws ; that sin and evil as pertaining to the human race will continue to all eternity, and the impenitent dead be consigned to utter extinction of conscious being or to irremediable woe, world without end.

None of these doctrines, however specious and attractive in some of their aspects, or awful in others, have any foundation in Scripture, in reason, or in sound spiritual philosophy, and have no place, therefore, in the platform of a true Christian church, but are to be forever discredited and proscribed. The moral government of God, of which Jesus is, above all others, the duly accredited Ambassador and Vicegerent among men, must be the same at all times and in all states of being, and must be administered in the interest and for the ultimate well-being of all its subjects. Yea, more ; it must be an all-powerful government, going forth conquering and to conquer, wherever its heralds lead the way, wherever its ensigns are set up, and in the end gain the victory over all its foes, bring all souls into submission to its authority, and win them all to heartfelt, grateful, happy allegiance to itself, to God, its Sovereign Head, and to Christ, its Minister Plenipotentiary and

Commandant on the earth, who "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Then, and not till then, shall he return his commission to Him who gave it, yield his place in the great mediatorial scheme of redemption to Him who appointed him unto it, "that God may be all in all." [See Vol. I, Discourses XXV-XXVIII.]

DISCOURSE XII.

EXPOSITION OF THEOLOGICAL FAITH. PART 2.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”—1 *Tim.* ii. 5.

“Thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”—2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

“Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”—*Luke* xii. 57.

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.”—*Acts* xxiv. 16.

In the present discourse I am to continue the discussion of that portion of the general Statement of Theological Faith proposed for the true Christian church, which has already been designated under the following head, to wit :—

2. Christ, The Scriptures, Reason, Conscience.

(1.) “The historical Jesus of Nazareth is pre-eminently the Son of God, the foreordained Christ, Lord, and Savior of the world; to be loved, revered, trusted, and obeyed in all sincerity and loyalty of heart.”

A deliberate, freely-given assent to and confession of this proposition or article of belief places

one unequivocally on distinctive Christian ground, and differentiates him from all classes of deniers, unbelievers, non-committalists, and indifferentists, whatever be the name they bear. Those making such assent and confession, if faithfully indoctrinated, regard Jesus as properly human in respect to his personal entity, yet as a providential, model man, designed, elected, and fitted by the superintending, indwelling divine Spirit to sustain the highest mediatorial office between God and men. They see in him a long-predicted personage, born in the fullness of time, matured according to the laws of spiritual development, inspired by the perpetually conscious presence of the Infinite Father, whereby he became Christ, the anointed. They view him, not as a common man — not as *a* Christ, one among many equally called and qualified for the work of uplifting and redeeming mankind, but as *the* Christ, first-born of many brethren, chiefest of the sons of God, emphatically *the* Son of God, and the chosen Saviour of the world from sin and its consequent evils and miseries. And this mission he fulfills, not by appeasing the divine wrath, nor by suffering the penalty of human transgression as a substitute for the transgressor, but by the whole complex process of his mediatorial service on earth and in heaven. Hence, they feel bound to love, reverence, trust, and obey him implicitly to the glory of God, the Father. To them, his word is God's word, his law God's law, his work God's work, and his authority the authority of God, Most High.

(2.) "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain records of indispensable value to mankind; especially those that relate to the Christ, which include promises of his coming and trustworthy testimonies concerning his birth, the essential spirit and principles of his religion, his life and ministry, his death, resurrection, glorification, and ultimate triumph over all the powers of darkness and iniquity."

This article sets aside all ecclesiastical authorities, apocryphal books, the opinions of "Christian Fathers," decisions of church councils, and unauthenticated portions of either Testament. It holds the sincere searcher after truth to the only reliable sources of information relating to Christ and pure Christianity, and frees him from those fetters by which priestly assumption has so long bound millions of nominal Christians to error and corruption. Common honesty, as well as fidelity to the great Teacher, demands that loyal disciples go to the only genuine records of what Jesus and his Apostles experienced, taught, and instituted to learn what Christianity is, and what it requires of all those who profess to believe it and desire to live by it. Such disciples will ignore all unauthorized versions of the sacred word, all traditions and misinterpretations born of ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry, and apply themselves to those sources of knowledge which alone are worthy of regard and confidence. In this way, and only in this way, can they be kept from harmful misbelief, and led in the path of truth and duty, as to Christ and his holy religion.

(3.) "The Scriptures are to be revered and studied in order to ascertain the facts, truths, doctrines, to which they bear witness; always regarding the spirit rather than the letter of them, as of vital importance to the salvation and happiness of mankind."

The essential ideas, principles, sentiments of the Old and New Testament are to be regarded as in some sense revelations of the mind and will of God, addressed to the human understanding, urged upon the conscience, and made obligatory for practical exemplification in the character and life. But how are they to be ascertained and rendered available to human need? Not by accepting the Bible in its verbal expression as the word of God, and by a consequent blind deference to the letter of the text, but by determining its vital spirit and carefully distinguishing between what is fundamental and what is incidental therein, between what is of local, transient nature and use and what is of permanent and everlasting importance and worth. The Christianity of Christ rests not upon the incidental, the local and transient in the Scriptures, but upon what is fundamental, permanent, ever-enduring therein. Could this be invalidated, Christianity would fall and the Bible would lose all vital power to uplift and save. But though all else were swept away the grand superstructure would remain unshaken and the Bible would still be worthy of profound veneration and regard. The Bible has suffered intolerable abuse from superstitious friends and infidel enemies alike, by reason of giving it a

literal interpretation and counting its entire contents as indiscriminately inspired and of equal divine authority. There is scarcely a false and absurd tenet held by wrangling sects, scarcely an unjust and brutish custom or practice of miscalled Christian civilization, that has not found justification in the mere letter of Scripture regardless of its essential spirit. And there is scarcely a criticism, objection, or sneer of Bible-haters, that does not rest on the same sandy foundation. The world will be rid of these abuses when the truth embodied in the article under notice is made the basis of human inquiry and judgment. Then will the sacred volume be found to stand upon its real merits and receive the rational reverence of all high-minded people which its transcendent excellence justifies and demands.

(4) "The New Testament Scriptures transcend the Old as they supplement and fulfill them in their teachings of absolute truth and righteousness." This is easily demonstrated by enlightened reason, which shows that it must be so in the very nature of things and by the concurrent testimony of both Testaments. The Old foreshadows and prophecies the New, while the New claims to be the consequent of the Old—the "better covenant," the more glorious dispensation, for the coming of which the Old prepares the way. Passages to this effect are abundant and familiar and need not be recapitulated. And yet deplorable error has always prevailed in the church respecting the relation of the two great divisions of the Scriptures to each other, as

it still prevails, much to the confusion of ingenuous minds and much to the injury of the cause of Christ; an error growing out of the already mentioned theory of the plenary inspiration of the Bible and out of the mischievous notion that every book, chapter, verse is alike the word of God. According to that theory, history, prophecy, poetry, parable, hyperbole are put upon the same level, the allegories of ancient literature and the sayings of ancient seers are vested with the same authority as the principles of eternal righteousness, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and the two great commands of love to God and love to man; while Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and all the older prophets are deemed as worthy of credence as Jesus, John, and Paul, or, it may be, better, if their utterances accord more fully with the opinions or prejudices of those seeking Bible sanction for themselves or others. In this way have priestly orders, state religion, vindictive punishment, slavery, polygamy, war, persecution of heretics, and many another relic of barbarism, been maintained through successive Christian ages, the vital spirit and unquestionable teachings of Jesus to the contrary notwithstanding. Thus has the mind of Christendom been brought to confusion, the Bible been made a football for contending partizans, the Gospel of the great Teacher been perverted, and Christ himself has suffered reproach, if not martyrdom, in the house of his professed friends. It is for the renovated church to correct these errors, reform these abuses, and restore proper relations

between the Old and New Testament records, and so further the cause of pure and undefiled religion among men.

(5.) "The free exercise of the reasoning faculties in man—the understanding and the judgment—is necessary to the ascertainment and comprehension of divine truth in its various bearings upon human life and destiny; but the reason has no authority against the truth when once assuredly ascertained." (See Discourse XVIII, Vol. II.)

This statement or declaration of Christian faith is designed to secure its confessors from two long-prevailing and mischievous errors which confront them in their endeavors to determine the true way of life. The first of these, generated and perpetuated by the church itself, is that reason and religion are hostile to each other; or, at least, that the powers of the understanding are not to be trusted in considering questions pertaining to the divine life, being misleading and dangerous; and that, therefore, blind, unreasoning faith in certain assumed verities concerning God, Christ, salvation, destiny, etc. are not only meritorious, but indispensable to acceptance with God. This is a monstrous fallacy and the foster parent of many abominations in the religious world. The other and an opposite error is that human reason is supreme in the being of man; the sole judge of divine truth, the only guide to duty, and the final arbiter of destiny; not one among several other human faculties to be consulted in the great work of life, and like them liable to err and so needing

light and inspiration, but a sort of infallible divinity whose behests are to be regarded without question or hesitancy. This is a scarcely less monstrous fallacy than the other, and like it the fruitful source of mischief and misery, precipitating myriads into self-deification, scepticism, unbelief, irreligion. It often leads one into the grossest materialism, causing him to ignore the existence of a divine being, an over-ruling providence, a supersensuous world, the undying element in man, immortality, revelations and inspirations, spiritual experiences, and either remanding all that is noblest and best in human nature to the realm of superstition and fantasy or degrading it to the low level of materialistic facts and phenomena or of merely animal impulse, passion, and possibility. The true office of reason is not to clothe itself in the robes of authority and issue decrees and declare judgments out of its own undisciplined, and self-exalted consciousness, but to recognize the manifold grades of being in which the universe abounds, physical, sensuous, intellectual, æsthetic, moral, religious, celestial, divine, and to form conclusions and render awards in any given case with due regard to its relation to the whole diversified realm to which it properly belongs. It is to search out principles, consult facts, weigh evidence, balance probabilities, employ every available means to determine what is right, good, and true, and, having so determined, to accept and abide by the result in all modesty, making it serviceable in the work of improving personal character and of enlightening

and emancipating mankind. Especially should it act upon these lines in respect to all matters pertaining to religion and the higher life of men, paying just deference to all the other faculties of human nature equally capable of judging divine realities with itself, and operating co-ordinately with them to the great end of perfecting the individual soul and bringing in the kingdom of God. This done its authority is at an end and its mission in the divine order accomplished.

(6.) "Fidelity to one's own conscientious convictions of truth and duty is essential to moral integrity and progress in the Christian life; but conscience is ever under imperative obligations to conform itself to the ever-revealing, ever-rising light of God."

Two important points are distinctively indicated and made obligatory in this declaration. First, that every one must be unwavering, faithful, and obedient to the dictates of his or her own conscience for the time being, as vitally necessary to personal moral rectitude and growth in the divine life; and second, that conscience is not self-contained, infallible, and unsusceptible of change, but subject to edification and improvement, and sacredly bound to welcome and yield itself to whatever accessions of wisdom and grace may, in divine providence, be vouchsafed it. Both of these attitudes of the moral sense were signally illustrated in the character and career of the Apostle Paul. He was scrupulously conscientious when in his early manhood, as Saul of Tarsus and a devoted champion of the Jewish

faith, he persecuted the disciples of Christ, and also when later on, after his conversion, he counted it all joy to suffer for the Master's sake and to go to a martyr's death, if so it need be in order to advance the cause and kingdom of his new found Lord. He was a conscientious moral tiger to begin with as he was afterward a moral lamb. His conscience ruled him no less in the former case than in the latter, but it was a conscience which recognized its own imperfection and which was submissive to such light from on high as was given it. When that light increased, or when new light was shed abroad in his mind and heart, Paul accepted it and followed it with unfaltering fidelity and zeal. Thus the intolerant and blood-thirsty foe of the Gospel of Jesus became its devoted, earnest, courageous champion; a sincere follower of the meek and lowly one of Nazareth, the foremost Apostle of the faith of Christ.

So must it be with all true disciples, with all members of the regenerate church. Conscience must be held sacred but not infallible. In its utmost sincerity it may mistake and lead one into serious error, possibly into great wrong, yet it is always to be respected, and fidelity to its demands is an imperative duty. And all the more imperative for the reason that only by such fidelity can the moral and spiritual progress of any human being be secured; can there be any such thing as growth of the divine life in the soul. One true to conscience will welcome the ever-increasing light which shines forth from the presence of the imma-

nent Spirit of God and will be led by it to higher and still higher levels of experience and attainment continually.

But we must not confound conscience with the light that illumines, quickens, guides it along its ever-ascending way. Conscience is the human attribute or faculty that recognizes moral distinctions, asserts the supremacy of truth and righteousness, commends faithfulness to duty and condemns unfaithfulness, and counts itself a servant, never a master, of that divine light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The light is the effluence of the spirit of truth, wisdom, and love, emanating from God to illumine, rectify, and perfect all human capabilities and qualify them for the highest possible service of God and man. Regarding conscience with all proper honor and counting infidelity to its monitions an offence worthy of severe reprobation, we are never to assume that our own or other people's consciences are the final authority in any case, but are themselves subject to a still higher power and a more trustworthy guidance—the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit of Him who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and who is more willing and anxious to bestow His Holy Spirit upon those who desire it than are earthly parents to bestow good things upon their children. Therefore are all members of the true Christian church—all learners in the school of Christ to be taught and pledged to be ever faithful to the dictates of conscience, and yet never to make it

a bar to higher divine illuminations, or allow its voice to drown the voice of the infinite Father of all souls. Rays of the eternal wisdom shining through the understanding and revealing the way of duty must govern and direct the conscience—the absolutely true and right, represented in the will and law of God, must be supreme, now and forevermore.

Thus far and thus much concerning the six articles of belief which form the complex subject of discussion in the present discourse, and which I deem of sufficient theoretical and practical importance to be incorporated in the organic basis of my proposed Christian church. The soundness of them I deem settled beyond all serious question by considerations which I have simply indicated in what I have said, without attempting to give them the elaboration of which they are capable, but which time and space will not allow me to indulge in under existing circumstances. I trust that the positions I have assumed, and the distinctive doctrines I have announced, will receive respectful and candid attention on the part of any who may be interested in building anew the Christian church on its original foundations, and that my suggested lines of argument therefor may be followed out to their legitimate conclusions.

But some will say, admitting that the several articles under notice are true and important, why not leave them to the good sense and better judgment of men; seeking to extend their acceptance and salutary influence by occasional reference

to them, or by the general inculcation of their essential spirit, without formulating them and enjoining them upon all who may be disposed to enter the proposed church; without incorporating them in a creed, and making them part and parcel of a definite statement of belief? For the reason that by so doing they would naturally fall out of notice, be ignored, neglected, treated as of no account; especially by the less thoughtful, conscientious, and devout of professors. Their value recognized, they should be made prominent, put in the foreground, kept ever in mind, and given pre-eminence in the organization of the church, as well as in sermons, exhortations, or other formal means of religious instruction, study, and improvement. As error has had place in the fundamental law of the church of the past, and been confirmed, strengthened, clothed with power thereby, so let it be with all vital truth in the church of the future — the church of the new dispensation which the world so much needs, and for which the noblest and most Christlike souls in no far distant day will be ready to labor as well as to pray.

DISCOURSE XIII.

EXPOSITION OF PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous — 1 *John*, iii, 7.

The declaration of divine truth which I propose as the proper platform of the true church of Christ presents eight articles of Personal Righteousness, to be acknowledged as sacred and obligatory by all those who are in orderly, organic connection with it. In some of my earlier published writings they were stated in a more condensed form than is given them in the series of discourses now in hand, and in Vol. II of this work on Primitive Christianity they are discussed at considerable length, as the reader has probably already found, or may find, at his pleasure. What I have now to offer concerning them in the way of exposition, verification, and defence will vary somewhat from the presentation there made, and will, I trust, contribute to a more perfect understanding of my views touching the practical nature and value of the religion which I most earnestly desire to see restored to its original simplicity and purity.

The first principle, or doctrine of Personal Righteousness, as tabulated in the present volume, is stated thus:—

1. "God, the universal Father, must be worshiped in spirit and in truth; not in formal pretence or glittering display, to be seen of men; not in any merely external solemnity or demonstration; not necessarily at any hallowed time or place;—but always and everywhere, with profound reverence and adoration for His moral attributes and perfections of character as an omnipresent, conscious Spirit; and in proportionate degree with a like reverence and adoration for all that is absolutely *Divine*."

This enjoined duty I proceed to analyze, define, illustrate, and apply in a few brief, expressive sentences, according to the best light and judgment at my command.

"God, the universal Father, must be worshiped;" that is, must be recognized, acknowledged, regarded, and looked up to as the infinite, self-conscious Supreme One, "in whom we all live and move and have our being." Not because He needs to receive homage, but because finite moral natures need to render it, in order to their own development, purification, and happiness. "In spirit and in truth;" that is, from within; by the understanding, the affections, and the will, with the mind and the heart, in all unaffectedness and sincerity. Nothing else is true worship; nothing else is acceptable to God or profitable to men. "Not in formal pretence, etc., to be seen of men;" not to attract the attention, win the admiration, or command the awe of fellow human beings; for this is hypocrisy and guile. "Not in any merely

external solemnity or demonstration ;” such worship is superficial, vain, worthless. “Not necessarily at any hallowed time or place ;” for while certain seasons or localities may reasonably be set apart and consecrated to sacred uses, they are not of themselves holy, and the observance of them is not necessarily worship. True worship is independent of them, although it may be helped by them. “With profound reverence and adoration for His moral attributes and perfections of character ;” not with wonder, awe, anxiety, fear, or terror, in view of His greatness, His almightiness, His power to harm or destroy, His anger or wrath, but with the profoundest possible regard, admiration, desire for union and communion with,—in view of His goodness—His perfect justice, wisdom, love—manifest in His all-perfect character. “As an omnipresent, conscious Spirit ;” not as an organic personality, representable by any outward image or likeness ; not as a localized being seated on some throne at the center of the universe ; not as some blind, unconscious principle or power of nature, or plexus of eternal laws ; not merely as omniscient, Deific intelligence distributed through unbounded space ; but as the living Soul of the universe—the Supreme Mind and Heart, acting voluntarily according to the dictates of perfect wisdom and love, at every conceivable point of immensity, from eternity to eternity. And “a like reverence and adoration” “in proportionate degree” is due towards everything that is “absolutely *Divine* ;” that is, towards whatever is of

the same nature as God, or proceeds directly from Him, as distinguished from all inferior grades of being, secondary causes, and the operations of merely human agencies. We are to recognize as essentially divine the sublime order of the world, the laws and forces of the material universe, the moral government of rational and responsible beings, the teachings of science, the evolutions of history, the diversified allotments in the life of mankind. As we are the revelations that God makes of Himself by His Spirit to the children of men, and by the lives and inspired teachings of poet and sage, of apostle and evangelist, and of all the "prophets that have been since the world began." All saintly and truly noble men and women are worthy of subordinate reverence and adoration, because they are animated by the Spirit of the immanent God, and because they illustrate something of the indwelling divinity in their lives and characters. The influence and workings of God's Spirit, what is termed the Holy Ghost, the Word (Logos), or Wisdom of God, wherever manifest and however ascertained, are divine in degree, and are to be proportionally revered and adored. Such manifestation was most strikingly displayed, and is most clearly seen, in Jesus of Nazareth, whose pre-eminent endowments, exalted character, and inimitable lessons concerning God, man, duty and destiny — concerning life, death, and immortality, attest, beyond all peradventure, the fact that God was with him and in him by the richness and fullness of the Holy Spirit, making him, indeed,

the Christ, the superiorly anointed one,—the teacher, guide, leader, redeemer of the children of men. Wherever divinity is seen to exist, subordinate, but akin to, as proceeding from the supreme divinity of the Infinite One, it is to receive the homage, the adoration, the praise, in proportionate degree, of all members of the true church of Christ.

This first article of Personal Righteousness in the creed of the new ecclesiasticism which I hope to aid in building up among men, not only avoids and precludes certain great errors concerning worship, which have prevailed in the church from an early day and which I have directly or indirectly referred to in what I have already said, but also certain other ones—errors of an opposite character yet no less detrimental to the true worshipful spirit and to a perfect righteousness. One of these is that times, places, and formalities of worship are *per se* incompatible with true spiritual devotion and should be discountenanced and abandoned. Another, that in the last analysis there is no essential difference between the uncreated self-existent divine nature and created, subordinate, dependent nature; that there is really but one substantial essence of being, though manifesting itself in endless and numberless variety of phenomena; therefore true worship must be pantheistic, recognizing God as all and all as God, to be revered and adored, not as a distinct, self-conscious personality, with definite conceptions of His nature and character, by definite, orderly exercises of devotion,

but as the impersonal absolute, with an informal, philosophical sentimentality. A third error is that however it may be with lower forms of being, material or animal, human nature and divine nature are certainly the same; God is human and man is divine, and the best if not the only way to know God is to study humanity and the truest way of worshiping Him is to exalt and glorify humanity, or the God in ourselves and in our common race. A final error that I will mention is that all worship, spiritual and formal alike, and all so-called search after, desire for, and communion with God is sheer superstition, born of baseless imaginations, illusions, or assumptions, worthless to God, if there be a God, and worse than worthless to men; in fine that there is no such thing as piety aside from or as a part of morality, and that all righteousness consists in promoting the welfare and happiness of ourselves and others of our kind, with no regard whatever to any supposed supreme being or to any other state or sphere of existence than that of which we are now the inhabitants—the state or sphere of mortality. These and all kindred errors are fatal to the pure worship of the Infinite One, founded as they are on falsities or perverted truths and hence should be rendered impossible of incorporation into the organic framework of a true church as they are by the article under consideration. [See Vol. II, Discourse I–VI.]

2. “Men should practice humility, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, whereinsoever regard for personal interest is contrary to divine law and order, even

unto great suffering and martyrdom for righteousness sake."

This article recognizes the important fact that our human personality is composed of two distinct natures, animal and moral, the lower and the higher; our conscious selfhood beginning on the lower or animal plane but rising and going on towards perfection by long and oftentimes painful effort in the realm of the higher or spiritual powers and possibilities. On the lower grade of life self-seeking and self-gratification are the predominating motives, with little regard to divine realities or to the universal good. But when the consciousness rises to the higher grade of being and comes to appreciate moral distinctions and to feel moral responsibilities, the animal instincts and passions are put under restraint, are subjected to a discipline which involves mortification, labor, suffering, but which eventuates in a new order of thought and conduct, in a new type of character; the change wrought being denominated in religious phraseology, the new birth. In the experience of this higher and better life a profound future is linked with the present, the good of others is regarded as inseparable from our own, the voice of God is heard calling to duty and service, and a still higher self-hood beckons to attainments and satisfactions yet to be realized. Then comes the necessity of self-denial and self-sacrifice; the humiliation of unhallowed pride and ambition, the curbing of the passions, the control of the appetites, the subordination of the entire animal nature

to the spiritual, the bringing of the whole being — body, mind, heart, will, into obedience to Christ. Everything inconsistent with the love of God, of the truth, and of fellow-human beings, must be renounced, overcome, put forever away. This requires humility, faith, courage, conflict; it may require martyrdom in extreme cases. But every cross in the order of divine providence wins a crown, and self-humiliation is the condition of true self-exaltation and the way to paradise.

This article also brings into condemnation certain mischievous errors that have prevailed among men in all ages of history. (1) That in consequence of Adam's sin all men are totally depraved and hence are destitute of any higher nature which with the aid of the Holy Spirit can exercise authority over the lower and bring it into obedience to the law of eternal righteousness. (2) That there is no such difference between the so-called higher and lower nature in man as is sometimes alleged, requiring ascent from the latter to the former by self-abnegation, repentance, regeneration, etc.; but that human nature is one and the same as to its essential quality and only needs development along parallel lines in its every department to serve the great ends of existence. (3) That the doctrine of self-denial, self-humiliation, self-sacrifice, is irrational, ignoble, unmanly, degrading, and hence worthy only of reprobation and utter denial. (4) That the innate promptings of man's nature teach that every one should look out for himself, which, being done, would leave none unprovided for, and that the

doctrine of caring for others as much or more than for one's self tends to thriftlessness, self-neglect, poverty, vice, and misery. (5) That right and wrong are based wholly on human expediency and public opinion for the time being, and so are subject to modification and change, and not on any eternal principles of moral order or divine authority which are "the same yesterday, today, and forever." (6) That all the appetites and passions of men are as much God-inspired and worthy of being gratified as their highest convictions. (7) That the only cure for the inordinate ambitions and evil propensities of mankind is to allow them unrestrained indulgence and let them burn themselves out or correct themselves by the chastisements thus self-inflicted. (8) That he is a fool who sacrifices his own pleasure or makes a martyr of himself for what he calls righteousness' sake. The world needs no church in which these and kindred falsities find justification or shelter. (For further elucidation of the subject, see Vol. II, Discourses VIII, IX.)

3. "Men should be just to all sentient beings of every name and grade, from the Infinite Creator himself to the lowest creature of His forming hand; in thought, in word, in deed, but never unmerciful and vindictive."

Justice is an essential principle of Personal Righteousness taught and exemplified by the Founder of the Christian faith. What is the nature of Justice? It is equity, fair and honorable dealing, the rendering to every one his due, or what right-

fully belongs to him according to reason and the law of God. It presupposes that sentient moral agents throughout the universe have rights, which, if properly exercised on their part and duly respected on the part of others, contribute to the highest virtue, order, and happiness of mankind individually and socially ; but which, if wrongfully exercised or disregarded, are fruitful of mischief to all concerned and disturbful of the moral order of the world. All rights imply corresponding duties and responsibilities. And the principle of Justice demands a recognition of those duties and responsibilities as well as of the rights themselves and a given line of conduct with reference to them. While the rights are to be regarded as sacred and inviolable, the involved obligations are to be insisted upon and faithfully met. This is the foundation of all sound and equitable jurisprudence, human and divine.

In obedience to this principle men are to cheerfully concede to others what properly belongs to them and to demand of them scrupulous fidelity to all the great trusts of life. And in claiming cognizance and respect for their own rights they are not to forget or ignore the duties and responsibilities which God and nature impose upon themselves, or fail to fulfil them to the utmost possible extent. The principle of justice also requires every moral agent to uphold and commend whatever in thought, word, or deed is morally right, good, and true, and to disallow and condemn whatever is wrong, evil, false, without respect of persons and regardless of fear or consequences. But it never requires or allows

them in any position or relationship, or under any provocation, to be unmerciful or injurious, even to the worst offenders against either divine or human laws, to the most incorrigible sinners. On the contrary, it demands that the condemnation and punishment of wrong-doers shall not extend beyond their legitimate use of upholding the standard of moral rectitude, and, in inseparable connection therewith, of reforming the offender; his good never being disregarded under pretext of promoting the general, public safety and welfare, or otherwise, and no punishment ever being inflicted which, in nature or degree, makes it difficult or renders it impossible for him to repent, turn back from his wicked ways, and become upright, virtuous, and worthy of confidence and esteem. And this principle of justice, as thus defined and applied, being an eternal principle, must be the same in the character of God, and in the administration of His divine government as it is in the required character and conduct of His human children. (See Vol. II, Discourse X.)

4. "They must be truthful in all exercises and manifestations of mind, in all manner of speech and action, without deceit or guile, and without resort to oath-taking or fear of penal vengeance from either God or man."

(The principle of Personal Righteousness thus formulated, and declared to be fundamental to the proper organization of the true church, is so fully explained, verified, and applied in Discourses XI and XVI, Vol. II, of the series, that no further exposition is necessary.)

5. "They must love all moral and sentient beings from God, the all-perfect Father, to the most feeble, most degraded, and vilest of His human children, with a love which suffereth long and is kind, and which worketh no ill to its object."

In this declaration the great central principle of Primitive Christianity is acknowledged to be true and obligatory. All moral agents, without exception and regardless of merit or blame, are to be loved with a love which contemplates no harm to them, but only their good. Not the righteous and worthy alone, but the unthankful and evil; not our friends only, but our enemies; not those simply who love us, but those who hate, persecute, and curse us. This required love does not hold it justifiable, in certain emergencies, to do absolute harm or wrong to any human being under the plea of self-defence, justice, necessity, or the public welfare, but ever desires and seeks the good and happiness of all. This is akin to God's love, Christ's love, the Holy Spirit's love; it is the only pure, true, Christian love. It approves and fellowships no one in sin, but the contrary; yet always strives to promote the well-being of evil-doers just as really and scrupulously in its rebukes, disfellowships, and punishments even, as it does that of well-doers in its approvals, fellowships, and rewards. It is the soul of genuine goodness, whether in the divine or in human nature, as it is the condition and bond of union between the divine and human. "Whoso loveth," after the fashion indicated, "is born of God, and knoweth God."

This article avoids and excludes those baneful errors in theology which, while affirming that "God is love," still embody and inculcate the doctrine of endless or annihilative punishment, which can result in no good to offenders, precludes their reformation, and which either makes existence an interminable curse to them, or sinks them out of sight in unconscious, remediless oblivion. Kindred to those theological errors are certain ethical ones, which, while re-echoing the sublime, beneficent, humane precepts and injunctions of the New Testament Scriptures, and extolling them to the utmost, still justify and defend injustice, oppression, vindictive punishments, the gallows, the war system; thus setting those precepts and injunctions at defiance, or trampling them in the dust, under the preposterous claim that they must all be allowed and practised *in love*. The world has had enough of this theological and ethical inconsistency and barbarism, and the regenerate church must provide against their perpetuation in its fundamental principles and form of organization. (See Vol. II, Discourse XII.)

6. "They must be pure, chaste, temperate, decorous, and orderly in all things; in thought, motive, word, deed, and cherished desire."

This article recognizes and insists upon the true nature and use of all things as seen from the moral standpoint, and requires that they be justly distinguished from each other, assigned to their proper places, allowed their appointed function, and held to the distinctive office they were intended

to fill, and to the specific purpose they were calculated to serve. We are not to confound right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error, the fit and the unfit, the one with the other, nor mingle them incongruously together. We are to hold every appetite, passion, propensity of the fleshly constitution strictly to its divinely intended purpose, and in no case allow them, one or all, to usurp an authority to which they have no rightful claim, or to gain the mastery over the moral and spiritual elements of our being. The native distinctions and relationships which characterize a common humanity are to be respected, and the divine purpose in creating them is to be counted sacred and inviolable. The mysterious economy by which the successive generations of men appear upon the face of the earth is to be regarded as a notable feature of the divine order of the world, which invests man with something of the creative energy of God Himself, to be employed to further the grand design of the all-wise Author of all things, and to dignify, adorn, exalt, and bless human character and human life; and not, as by perversion and abuse is often the case, to degrade, corrupt, and debauch them, making what should be deemed the holiest of offices—the transmission of life and the perpetuation of humanity—a source of demoralization, shame, infamy. (See Vol. II, Discourse XV, for further discussion of this subject.)

7. "They must be patient, persevering, and steadfast in the furtherance of all right aims and pursuits."

The principle or duty here stated and inculcated is well and strongly put by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (ii. 6, 7,) where he says "Who will render * * * to those that by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Right aims and pursuits are not only to be kept before us as ends to be promoted or achieved, as stimulants to personal endeavor, but they are to command our constant effort, our unfaltering diligence and zeal. The duties we owe to God and man are to be discharged, not by fits and starts, not spasmodically, not on special occasions or at convenient seasons, but continuously, unintermittingly, without break or delay, without cessation or loss of interest, to the end of life. They are to be discharged, moreover, without feverish excitement, disquietude, over-anxiety, or discouragement, in view of opposing forces, hindrances, and long-deferred achievements or results, but calmly, resolutely, perseveringly, in the full assurance that our labor is not in vain in the Lord, that no righteous act falls fruitless, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not, that, faithful to our trust, we shall come off conquerors and more than conquerors, through Him who loved us. We are always to assume and feel that what ought to be done can be done, that truth, justice, right, love, shall triumph at the last, and that we may do something, if not in our own strength, yet in the strength of the Mighty Helper of all aspiring, struggling souls, to bring about the grand consummation. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

8. "They must unceasingly endeavor, by watchfulness and prayer, by constant progress in holy living, to become more and more Christlike in all respects; to be perfect in righteousness and love as God is perfect—trusting ever in divine strength and grace to supply their deficiencies, and enable them successfully "to press forward towards the mark for the prize of their high calling."

This is the crowning article of my creed, so far as it relates to Personal Righteousness, embodying the principle and duty of unceasing progress towards divine moral perfection, which is the supreme excellence and glory of the Christian life. We are never to imagine ourselves wise and good enough to pause in our efforts for self-improvement, to become stereotyped, to fossilize, and to aspire after nothing spiritually higher than what we have attained. Christ is to be our perpetual model and guide under the Infinite One, to whom he ever points us, saying, "Be ye perfect even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." This is not enjoining infinite moral excellence upon finite beings, but the same quality and type of character that is illustrated in God, which we are to illustrate to the utmost of our capacity. It sets before all moral agents the eternal divine goodness as the standard of duty, as the immaculate ideal which they are to strive incessantly to make real as far as possible in themselves; omitting or neglecting no virtue or grace essential to such a sublime and glorious achievement.

The article under notice avoids and precludes such mischievous fallacies as that righteousness in God is radically different from true righteousness in men; that God is not to be regarded as our Great Exemplar; that it is impossible for men to attain a Godlike character; that simple conversion to Christ and the determination to lead a holy life are all that is required of any soul, without growth in grace and in divine moral excellence; that the church is not a progressive institution or one of moral and spiritual gradation, requiring continual advancement or ascent toward the more perfect and divine, but an ecclesiastical museum for the preservation and exhibition of religious fossils and petrifications; and that it is treason to Christ to attempt or propose changes of form and administration suited to the ever-changing conditions of thought and life in the world at large. These falsities are seriously detrimental to the healthy development and orderly growth of Christian character and to the highest usefulness of the church, and are therefore to be forevermore disallowed and exiled from the realm of religion.

The Personal Righteousness delineated in this Discourse is to be exalted, honored, glorified in the church of the better dispensation. It is to be confessed, preached, illustrated, exemplified by its members—clerical and lay alike—and made dominant in personal character and in all the relations and concerns of life, even to the extent of shaping ultimately the policies and multiform activities of communities, states, and nations throughout the entire world.

DISCOURSE XIV.

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL ORDER.

“Not as though I were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”—*Phil.* iii. 12.

“For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also in Christ.” “Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.”—*1 Cor.* xii. 12, 27.

The true church of Christ, as I apprehend it and as I have indicated to some extent in former Discourses, contemplates and requires in its practical development and administration a new and higher order of social life than that which now exists anywhere upon the face of the earth; one established upon better principles, animated more by the Spirit of the Gospel of our Lord, having greater regard for the interest and welfare of all classes and conditions of people, and more conducive to human virtue, progress, harmony, and happiness. The great fundamental ideas, first truths, or principles which are to distinguish such a social order are definitely tabulated in Discourse VII of the present volume, and constitute the theme or themes of discussion at this time, receiving attention in the order of succession already given them.

I. "The supreme, universal, and perfect Fatherhood of God."

I have already stated and unfolded to some extent what I regard as the true conception of God's nature, character, and relation to mankind, including or implying the idea of his divine Fatherhood, but have not elaborated this last particular with the distinctness and fulness which its importance in the reconstructive work I have undertaken demands. For it is in fact the sublimest as it is the most central of religious truths; the pre-eminent revelation of the Christ, and the chief corner-stone upon which rest the new theology of Christendom, the regenerate church, and the kingdom of a better future for mankind. In the disclosures of the New Testament concerning the Divine Being we have not only a self-existent, omnipresent, conscious Spirit for our God, but a supreme, universal, all-perfect Father. He is not only the First Cause, Sustainer, and Governor of the whole infinitarium of being, from the minutest atom to the most massive globe and from the smallest animalcule to the loftiest archangel, but He is the Father of all spirits, including, as most concerns us in this discussion, mankind. As Jesus taught He is the Father of "the spirits of all flesh" on earth and in the unseen world;—the Father of the good, bad, and indifferent; of all the children of men whatever their capability, development, religion, or moral character. He always has sustained this tender and sacred relation to them and always will, world without end; for He changeth not but is the same in the essentials of his being, "yesterday,

today, and forever." As a Father of all men, He loves all, cares for all, blesses all, seeks the enduring good and happiness of all. He governs all as a Father, disciplines them, rewards them, punishes them, under the dictates and impulses of an all-wise parental affection and regard, cherished and manifested from eternity to eternity. This is the grandest of all religious ideas, the most sublime of all conceptions of the great uncreated, the divinest of truths, worthy of profound contemplation, of loftiest commendation, of most reverential, heartfelt gratitude and praise.

But this thought or idea of the divine Fatherhood is not simply a subject of intellectual apprehension, a mere theory of the nature and character of Deity, but a most inspiring, uplifting, ennobling truth, sustaining intimate relations to human character and conduct, and having an immediate bearing upon human life in all its higher aspects, relationships, and possibilities. Nothing can so touch, arouse, inspire the soul of man as the doctrine of God as a Father. What strength, encouragement, comfort, consolation, is there in it! Morally and spiritually it is the most practical of all doctrines; impressing one with the thought that he is the child of a divine, all-perfect parentage, loved, cared for, guarded, and governed accordingly; making worship on his part, not only a sacred duty but a high privilege and a delight; causing him to see the sinfulness of irreverence, ingratitude, and disobedience, and to feel profound sorrow therefor; calling out his deepest affections responsively to the parental wisdom and love that

embosom him and his race; and quickening within him the holy ambition to become Godlike in spirit, conduct, and character, to the utmost of his possibility.

The article of faith under notice transcends and excludes all such theological notions as that any portion or class of mankind derive existence from any other creative source than the divine Father; that the Supreme Being reprobates any one or dooms him to endless sin and suffering; that He treats His friends with parental tenderness but his enemies as a vengeful sovereign; that whatever kindness and beneficence He manifests towards all men in the present life He will display only to those who die in the true faith or in compliance with certain alleged conditions of salvation in the life to come, while regarding all the rest as incorrigible offenders and aliens, to be shut away from His presence and His joy forevermore. It also transcends and excludes those corresponding ethical notions according to which slavery, war, capital punishment, vindictive penalties, and the whole list of brutal inflictions and customs are sanctioned and justified by individuals and nations, under the pretence that they are necessary to the public defence and welfare, and therefore allowable and even commendable within the pale of the church itself. These and all kindred errors and delusions, born of ignorance and barbarism, are discredited and made reprehensible and odious when regarded in the light of the effulgent doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God.

2. "The universal Brotherhood of Mankind and all finite moral agents."

This principle or doctrine is a natural sequence of that of the divine Fatherhood, and by logical necessity is closely related to it. No reference is made in considering it to beings or creatures below the moral plane, but all of every grade upon that plane are included in the category named, be they of high or low degree, dwelling in this or in some other world. The immediate and customary application or use of it, however, which makes it serve our present purpose, limits it to the sphere of our common humanity and especially within the confines of time and sense. In regard to the relation of man to man and to the duties growing out of that relationship, the truth embodied in this second article of the platform of Social Order is as lofty and majestic in ethics as the first one is in polemics. In theory it may be partially or sentimentally apprehended by an inferior grade of mind and character, but in practice and as a principle of duty its far reaching significance and applicability can be recognized and understood only by high-born souls — souls richly endowed with the wisdom and deeply imbued with the love of Christ. It is easy to rhapsodize over the idea of human brotherhood, to extol and glorify it in eloquent and fervid rhetoric, but to apply it and live according to its spirit is quite another matter; is the privilege and achievement only of those who possess much of the mind of the Master and who have drank freely of the waters with which his being was nourished and invigorated, the fountains whereof in the illimitable love of God are open to every one thirsting for them. Beginning with the individual the true sense of brotherhood

extends to family and friends, to neighbors and fellow citizens, to the larger and ever-widening circles of humanity, until all states and nations, peoples and races to the very ends of the earth, are included in the sweep of its beneficent desire and heaven-inspired purpose. So teaches and requires our elder Brother, Instructor, Friend, the Christ of God, and so sings the humanely religious poet of our mother land in the following lines :—

“Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake.
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads ;
Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace,
One’s country next, and last the entire race.
Wide and more wide the o’erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in of human kind ;
Earth smiles around, with boundless beauty blest,
And Heaven beholds its image in his breast.”

This principle of Human Brotherhood implies that the highest good of every individual, every associated body of people, and of the universal race of man is essentially the same, and that no volition, act, or course of conduct can be absolutely right which does not regard, seek, and legitimately promote the highest good of each and all of human kind. Whatever impairs or sacrifices the universal good cannot, all things considered, be best for one’s country, family, or self ; and whatever disregards or sacrifices the good of any individual, family, or nation cannot be on the whole best for the race. It becomes therefore our duty to treat every human being and every

class or association of human beings in the spirit of fraternity, with conscientious regard for his and their real welfare and happiness. The relation of brotherhood forbids that we kill, maim, torture, or harm any fellow-creature, however disorderly or wicked he may be, but it does not forbid us to rebuke, restrain, and chastise the disorderly and wicked, without positive injury to them, when they or the community at large are to be benefited thereby. It rather requires this oftentimes as a fraternal act and as a duty to all concerned. This is the proper application of the doctrine under notice as taught and exemplified by the Master.

This doctrine of brotherhood is a conclusive protest against certain ethical assumptions which are still popular in so-called Christian civilization, among which are the following; that self-defence or the defence of family, state, or nation, beyond a limited point of forbearance, justifies a resort to violence and even the destruction of life in extreme cases; that in such cases the good of the assailant may be sacrificed to the good of the person assaulted and to the safety of the public; that to spare the lives or show mercy to the outrageously lawless and criminal is cruelty to the innocent and reprehensible disregard of the common welfare; that patriotism is a primal virtue and may subordinate the precepts of the Gospel of Christ to the behests of the powers that be; and that the vindictive punishment of evil-doers and the destruction of those declared to be enemies of the state or nation are perfectly consistent with the teaching and spirit of Christ. If we cannot have a church

that rises above and utters a testimony against these pretensions, there is little occasion for setting aside the one we now have, or for seeking its reformation.

3. "The declared perfect love of God to all mankind."

This universal love of God toward men is implied and comprised in His moral perfection of character, and especially in His divine Fatherhood. But what are we to understand by it? Not that He approves, commends, or is pleased with their follies, frailties, perversities, iniquities, or regards them otherwise than with profound moral reprobation; not that He counts them free from all responsibility for their conduct and character; not that He ignores or sets aside as of no importance the great distinction between well-doing and ill-doing, between obedience to Him and disobedience; or that He regards the innocent and the guilty, the righteous and the wicked, with the same feelings or emotions; not that in the order of His moral government He treats all alike, irrespective of their moral deserts. By no means. But that recognizing these differences; recognizing the wrong, the error, the wickedness of men, He sees back of them all, underneath all of them, the essential being, the spiritual entity, the spark of divinity, the image of Himself, which, however overlaid by worldliness and sin, however blurred by selfishness and crime, however paralyzed by passion and unhallowed desire, is yet not only existent but charged with immortal possibilities and powers; is yet akin to His own nature and capable of responding to the

appeals and monitions of His Holy Spirit. And *that* the Father loves, cares for, seeks to bless, in time and eternity. And for the sake of this spiritual, divine, immortal element in men, He preserves, protects, governs them and showers upon them innumerable mercies and tokens of His parental guardianship and regard. For the sake of this same element in men, he reproves, admonishes, chastens, punishes them for their misdeeds; not in wrath but in love; not in justice alone but in mercy also; not simply that He may manifest His moral abhorrence of wrong, or that they may realize its exceeding sinfulness and fearful consequences, but that they may be profited thereby, be brought to repentance, and made partakers of His holiness. So not only are the manifold mercies of God expressions of His unfailing goodness, but His chastisements also; all alike proclaiming His boundless, never-failing love to all mankind. The revelations of nature, the testimonies of human history, the experience of life, as well as the Christian Scriptures, all bear witness to this sublime truth.

4. "The required perfect love of man to God."

The principle involved in this article of faith is so plainly and emphatically stated in the Gospels and the corresponding duty so unequivocally urged that no lengthy exposition of it is needed at my hands. What more explicit and comprehensible on this point than the answer of Jesus to the inquiry touching the first great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with

all thy soul and with all thy mind." That is, with all thine affectional, thy moral and spiritual, thy mental powers; with thy entire nature; with a whole-hearted, holy, rational love. It is not an admiration, a tender regard, an affection for the being or personality of God that is required of men, but for His moral nature, for the attributes of His character, for His government and authority; and impliedly for all that is divine wheresoever, howsoever, and in whomsoever, manifest. The required love of man to God inspires reverence and trust, begets obedience to His laws, promotes virtue and righteousness, tends to social and civic order, yields the deepest, purest bliss. Who cherishes it becomes divine and helps to divinize the world.

5. "The required perfect love of man to man."

This declaration with the obligation attending it is but a moral as well as logical corollary of the doctrine of Human Brotherhood just now considered. Brotherliness and love to one another are closely-corresponding if not synonymous terms. The one implies and includes the other. The second great command asserts the duty they in common represent. And the most authoritative teachings of Christ elsewhere and of the Apostles inculcate the same sacred lesson. Its relation to the most vital experience of the human soul and its importance in the Christian type of life is set forth most plainly by John when he says, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And the nature,

character, and practical application is as plainly indicated by Paul, "Love worketh no ill to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Or more explicitly and comprehensively; "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." I need not expatiate farther.

6. "The required just reproof and disfellowship of evil-doers."

The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments bear ample witness to the duty expressed in this sentence. The morally didactic and prophetic portions of the former are characterized largely by testimonies against all forms of evil-doing, and by the condemnation and exposure of evil-doers. The teachings of the latter are no less stringent though breathing a more kindly and charitable spirit and enjoining a more scrupulous care in respect to complicity with iniquity. In Paul's charge to Timothy, the young minister was instructed to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," and in his letter to the Ephesians he enjoins the brethren to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them." And these passages are representative of the teaching and spirit of the Master in this regard. A blind or lax morality would persuade us to make

no such marked distinction between good and evil, between the righteous and the wicked, and counsel us to a more lenient and indulgent course. But the pure morality of the Gospel is of a sterner quality. Insisting without modification or limitation upon the broadest charity, upon a love "which worketh no ill," it also insists upon the most rigid adherence to principle in relation to all forms of wrong. It allows no parleying and no compromise with unrighteousness. It cannot say, "Well done" to the workers of iniquity, nor countenance them by treating them as if they were without reproach or guile. This would paralyze its power to reform and save them; it would confound itself with its opposite, nulify its testimony against wickedness; it would be ethical suicide. Jesus set us an example of fidelity to his own teaching and to the spirit of his religion in this regard when he pronounced his woes upon the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites; when he drove money-changers from the temple; when he refused to be made king of a wicked and adulterous people. And we can do no less than follow him in this as in other matters pertaining to the right ordering of our lives. Let us be faithful.

7. "The required abstinence from resistance of evil with evil."

To resist evil is one of the distinct purposes for which Christ came into the world, and to ultimately overcome it and put it forever away is one of the great ends which his Gospel is destined to achieve. To resist evil is therefore a primary duty of all

true followers of Jesus, of all faithful, consistent believers in his religion. But such resistance must be made in a rightful way and by righteous means. Opposition to wrong-doing must not be manifested or carried on by wrong-doing. Satan cannot cast out Satan. We are not to meet falsehood with falsehood, selfishness with selfishness, cruelty with cruelty, violence with violence, wrath with wrath, injury with injury, bloodshed with bloodshed. No form of iniquity can be vanquished by its corresponding iniquity but by its opposite. The antidote for lying is truth; for selfishness is generosity; for cruelty, kindness, and so on. Evil must be resisted and can be overcome only with good. No wickedness must be wrought under pretence of promoting the general welfare; no injustice committed in order to secure beneficent results; no deceit practiced to help a good cause; no immorality perpetrated for righteousness' sake. The end does not sanctify the means nor is it justifiable under the Christian law of life to do evil that good may come. (For a full exposition of this sublime doctrine, Christian Non-Resistance, see Vol. II, Discourse XIII)

8. "The designed and required social unity and harmony of all Christlike souls."

This article not only enjoins unity and harmony among the disciples of Christ in their ecclesiastical relations, cordial and friendly intercourse and co-operation on the strictly religious plane, but it anticipates and provides for corresponding unity, harmony, friendliness, and co-operation in *all* the concerns of

life. It contemplates an order of human society, represented in and by the church, which is to transcend and exclude the manifold antagonisms of person, property, and selfish interest which exist in the world as now organized and governed, and which are the source of incalculable degradation, suffering, and misery to multitudes of the children of men. It contemplates an order of human society in which the spirit and principles of the religion of the New Testament shall prevail and be manifest in every department of existence and in all possible human affairs; an order of society which shall in some good degree epitomize the long-prophesied and long-desired kingdom of heaven on the earth. That this state of unity and harmony is included in the divine design and required by the revealed will and purpose of God in Jesus Christ is clearly indicated in the prophetic utterances recorded in both the Old and New Testaments; in the aspirations and prayers of all holy souls; in the progressive nature and unmeasured possibilities of mankind; in the diffusive, uplifting, regenerating, ennobling, harmonizing power of Christian truth and love; and in the growing tendency seen on every hand in these later times towards that blessed result. Selfish, carnal minds cannot appreciate, even if they can entertain, so grand a thought, so sublime a conception of unity, harmony, brotherhood, peace, as the article of faith we are considering forecasts and demands at the hands of the reconstructed church; much less are they qualified to make that thought or conception a glorious reality, to be the archi-

fects of the divine society of the future to which it points and for which it prepares the way. Only highly spiritualized souls, those who have entered most fully into the mind and spirit of Christ, those who are most thoroughly consecrated to his service—only such can or will engage in the sacred work of laying sure and strong the foundations and rearing the superstructure of that social order which is the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse coming down from God out of heaven. To that work the church which will some day be founded, whose advent I would fain do something to hasten, is summoned, and charged with the duty of performing it in the article before us. Let it not be unmindful of the high commission, or neglectful of the sacred, all-important obligation.

DISCOURSE XV.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

“He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church: * * * that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” — *Col.* i. 18.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” — *Eph.* iv. 11, 12.

“There are differences of administrations but the same Lord.” — *1 Cor.* xii. 5.

I have now reached the fifth section of the Statement of Faith proposed by me as the platform or foundation of a properly organized Christian church. It consists of six articles which I will proceed to expound, illustrate, and apply in their heretofore tabulated order.

1. “There should be some definitely prescribed and clearly understood conditions of membership.”

The true church is not a promiscuous collection of people interested in things pertaining to the religious life, coming together on occasions as convenience or necessity, pleasure or duty may prompt; nor should it ever be regarded in that light; and its convocations are not simply mass meetings designed to serve merely temporary uses. It is a compact association or body of persons solemnly

avowing an adherence to certain distinctive principles of faith and practice, in which they are substantially agreed, banded together for the specific purpose of promoting the growth of the Christlike life in those immediately concerned, and the extension of the realm of truth, righteousness, love, peace, and joy on the earth. It must, therefore, conform to the general modes of organization and administration which experience in other important interests of life has proved to be essential to success, if it would be a power for good in the world, exercising its functions and prerogatives from generation to generation through successive periods of human history. It must have a definitely enrolled list of recognized, responsible members, who, in their associated capacity, are to be considered as constituting the church, and as in sacred duty bound to maintain its integrity, honor, acknowledged faith, its working activities, its high character and unsullied reputation, and its permanent usefulness as an institution of human society. Such a membership can be established only by having some fixed rules or conditions of admission to it and by scrupulously insisting in every instance upon conforming to them. Otherwise there will be after a little time only a conglomerate medley of incompatibles and irresponsibles with no strong bond of union holding them together, and the church will be composed only of individual fragments, shorn of that power which combined energy and voluntary, whole-hearted co-operation only can evolve. Under such a lax, imbecile policy the

church would be but an external form of ecclesiasticism and however imposing and pretentious would have no good reason for being.

What the conditions of admission into the church of the future should be it is not my purpose to prescribe. It is probable that no one unvarying list could be formulated which it would be wise to attempt to apply in all cases indiscriminately. Each church should be allowed the liberty of determining the matter for itself and of acting upon its own responsibility according to the best light it could obtain. Only that certain fundamentals should be included and held inviolable under all circumstances. The old apothegm in this connection is worthy of remembrance and of application; "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." There should be in every instance an honest, open, unqualified pledge of faith in and loyalty to Christ as the great spiritual Head of the church—its Leader and Teacher, of adherence to the distinguishing truths, principles, doctrines of his religion as revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, and of a fixed, determined purpose to make those truths, principles, doctrines, baptized with the spirit of Christ, dominant in every department and relation of life—to be Christlike in conduct and character—in deed, word, thought, feeling, and cherished desire. This avowed and pledged fidelity might be expressed in whatever verbal form seemed best in any case, but it should always be substantially required as a condition of membership of any and every church bearing the

Christian name. Without such pledged fidelity the right of a church to that name might well be questioned if not denied.

But in respect to the manner in which persons shall be initiated into the church, the form or ceremonial employed, which is properly included among the conditions of admission, is a matter of expediency and may vary with times, places, and circumstances. It should therefore be left to the discretion of each church to adopt such method as might be deemed wise and appropriate and no church should in any way be blamed or suffer reproach for not conforming to the established practice of some other church or of the great body of churches so long as it violated none of the essentials of Christian faith and maintained its allegiance to the great Founder of that faith as shown in the character and works of those belonging to it. The primitive church made water baptism, as derived from prior custom, a mode of initiation and covenanted discipleship, yet it was not regarded as indispensable, or, I think, universally employed. The true, vital Christian baptism is of the spirit, producing the moral likeness of Christ, and that experienced the external rite may be left to the wisdom or preference of each church without dictation or interference.

2. "There should be wisely provided constitutional formularies of organic association, to be intelligently adopted and scrupulously observed."

Neander thinks that the earliest Christian churches in their organic character were modeled after that of

the Jewish synagogue, or much resembled it, as was very likely the case. However that was, we may be quite sure that they had, at an early day, a regularly constituted membership, a definite form of organization as to offices and functions, and regular modes of administration. These would naturally be very simple and practical at the outset. Among them were included, according to the testimony of the New Testament records, ways and means of caring for the poor and suffering among the brethren and of furnishing them and their dependents with what was requisite for their sustenance, comfort, and general well-being. What further constitutional provision was made at that period for supplying the necessities of the less fortunate and prosperous, or for contributing to their happiness we have no means of knowing, as we have none for determining conclusively whether or not those primitive believers had anything like a formulated bond of union, written constitution, or literal charter for their governance. That is a matter of little importance so long as there is good reason for affirming that they had the things for which documents of this sort stand, to wit: the definitely recognized membership, equitable distribution of responsibilities, and orderly methods of administration; so long too as there was in the very genius of Christianity itself, as they understood and applied it, ample adaptability to the changed conditions and ever-increasing necessity of the church and the world for all coming generations;—ample provision for that social expression

of the Christian law of love to God and man, which I have portrayed and insisted upon in the earlier pages of the present volume.

3. "There should be some recognized, cordially approved, and duly authenticated order of Christian ministry."

This article or declaration is not designed and must not be understood to provide for a grand, imposing, priestly hierarchy composed of numerous grades of incumbents distinguished from each other by their respective titles, dignities, and assumed prerogatives and powers, such as ecclesiastical ambition, craft, and corruption have generated and perpetuated in the church from near the beginning to the present day; but for a ministry substantially like that indicated in the New Testament; circumspect, exemplary, sympathetic, well trained in the Scriptures and in all divine knowledge, apt to teach the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and efficient in turning men from the error of their ways and in helping them to lead the Christian life; a ministry like that described by the poet Cowper:

"Simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impressed
Themselves, as conscious of their sacred charge
And anxious mainly that the flock they feed
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."

Such a ministry will be quite unlike the clergy of the medieval church which was characterized by inordinate personal pride, ecclesiastical arrogance, tyrannical exercise of authority and power, and not infrequently by immorality and guilt, and which was a primal cause of the early degeneracy of the church and of the wide-spread and long-continued corruption that prevailed within its borders. It will be a ministry of instruction, contributing to the edification of those who wait upon it; of helpfulness, ready to assist in all possible ways, needy, and struggling souls,—ready to sympathize with the friendless, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to strengthen the weak, to comfort the sorrowing, to breathe hope into the heart of the despondent, to point those nearing the verge of time to the fairer fields and the brighter skies of the immortal world, and to renew, if possible, the life of the wayward and sinful into the image of Christ; a ministry of inspiration, arousing in the human heart a sense of responsibility, a purpose to live divinely, a trust whose sustaining, soothing, cheering power is the deep sweet peace of God. Such a ministry the regenerate church will need; such a ministry substantially it will have; and under such a ministry the flock of the good Shepherd will be nourished in all heavenly graces and powers, the church will prosper as never in all its history before, the divine kingdom will be rapidly built up, and God will be glorified. Amen: so let it be.

4. "There should be some duly appointed official servants to judiciously care for the various interests of the church and execute its various activities."

Every church, whatever its distinctive form of organization or administrative policy, will necessarily have interests to be guarded and activities to be directed which cannot be left to the action of the members indiscriminately or *en masse*, but must be specially assigned to specially chosen agents or they will suffer detriment and fail of the good they represent and are designed to promote. No machinery runs itself or works to any desirable purpose when subject to no intelligent oversight or management. Ecclesiastical machinery is like all other kinds in this respect. It must have enlightened, prudent, responsible superintendence or it will not simply avail nothing in promoting the objects of church life but work mischief, defeating what it should achieve. Hence the wisdom and necessity of having appropriately designated official servants to attend to certain prescribed duties and to be held to account for the faithful and satisfactory discharge of the trust reposed in them. So far as we know the only such servants in the apostolic church were what were called deacons and deaconesses, whose business it was to care for the poor and sick and have charge of general charity work, though ere long other responsibilities were added to these.

Still later church officers were increased. There were sub-deacons, *lectores*, or readers of the Scriptures; aeolyths, who assisted the bishops in their

work; exorcists, who had the power of healing certain diseases; ostiarii, who had charge of places of worship, arranged for religious services, etc. As time has gone on the servants of the church have been multiplied, to meet some real or supposed need, or, as in political life, to gratify self-seeking aspirants' desire for some position of honor, ease, or high repute. In these days, when the church has taken up so many lines of work previously unthought of, the necessity for an additional number of officers to have charge of the new activities is obvious. And this will continue in days to come when the sphere of church life shall be so much enlarged as to include a multitude of agencies for the application of Christian principles to the more general social affairs of men. The matter is one of practical wisdom, of how to meet the growing exigencies of the religious world, of how to do the work that the church of the better era will be required to do. There is no other rational, effectual, way than to put its various departments into the charge of competent, reliable persons and then to hold them responsible for the faithful discharge of the trust confided to them.

5. "There should be some clearly expressed and easily understood rules of wholesome discipline."

In other words the church should have the right and the acknowledged power of preserving the integrity and purity of its own membership. Otherwise the very ends of its existence would be in danger of being subverted or its power for good be seriously impaired by the prevalence within its

pale of disorderliness and immorality. How often has the church in the past suffered reproach and lost influence by having in its organic fellowship self-seeking, worldly-minded, perhaps vicious men and women, whom it would not or could not dislodge, but who, like barnacles clinging to the sides of a ship, were only sources of delay and danger to the cause whose interests were involved.

But rules of discipline should be few, simple, just, efficacious, and pertain to matters of vital importance. Ordinary shortcomings, venial offences, errors and misdemeanors incidental to the imperfection of human nature, should be reproved and rebuked indeed, in proper time and place, but in a kindly, forgiving spirit, and with the hope that they will be outgrown or overcome, especially if they be accompanied with regret and penitence on the part of the guilty ones. And even long forbearance and an indisposition to judge harshly or condemn prematurely, a willingness to forgive "seventy times seven" times, in the spirit of the Master, are most worthy and commendable. But there is a point beyond which tolerance and concession would be blameworthy and treachery to the cause of truth and righteousness as well as perilous to the character, reputation, and moral power of the church itself. Open disloyalty to the Christian name and confession, persistent violations of the law of love to God and man and of the plain precepts of the Master, determined, obstinate unwillingness to hear reproof, to forsake the wrong and to follow the right way, or a stolid indifference to the claims of

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virtue and righteousness, should, after repeated and unavailing endeavors to effect a change of mind and heart and to restore the offender in the spirit of meekness, be firmly but honestly testified against and prevented from working mischief, by withdrawal of fellowship and discharge from the acknowledged bonds and obligations of unity and co-operation. And this is to be done on the part of the church "more in sorrow than in anger" and with no inclination or desire to persecute or harm the subject of exclusion and disfellowship. All must be done in the spirit of love and good will, or it is itself a violation of the law of Christ and an offence against God. But it *must* be done in extreme cases; healthful discipline according to clearly expressed and easily understood rules *must* be maintained in all cases requiring it, or the church will suffer irretrievable moral deterioration and loss of power to uplift and save the world.

6. "There should be some provision for the revising and amending of the constitution and established rules of the church."

The details of revision and amendment can not in the nature of things be specified, dependent as they are upon ever-changing conditions and circumstances of church life and upon the increasing needs of both the church and the world; but the privilege and duty of arranging them are of vital importance. And for two indisputable reasons. Because the genius of Christianity is one of evolution, progress, and ever fresh adaption to human necessities. This is clearly set forth in the writings of the Evangel-

ists and Apostles as it is in the history of the church. Because the absolute truth of the religion of Christ, must be apprehended, stated, and made operative in the world by fallible men; men more or less imperfect, but who are learning more and more of truth and of its requirements from generation to generation and from age to age, and who must not be prevented from using their increased wisdom for the good of the church and of humanity by an iron-bound, inflexible form of government, or policy of administration. A church that makes no provision like that under notice, which does not contemplate or anticipate growth, changed conditions, increase of wisdom, new opportunities or occasions for promoting the kingdom of God, is quite likely to become crystalized, stereotyped, fettered by tradition or worn-out methods — to lose the power of self-development and therewith the power to move and uplift the world. Hence the desirableness and the necessity for this sixth article of the section of my Statement of Faith which relates to the proper organization and administration of church affairs.

I am aware that very decided objections are likely to be urged against the positions I have taken and attempted to maintain in this discourse; objections of two kinds, coming from two different sources as they will, and yet from sources in a general way worthy of respectful, candid consideration, which induces me to give a little time and space to each of them in its turn.

1. On the one hand it will be claimed that I am making altogether too much of the matter of organization; laying far too much stress upon ways and means of operation, and so losing sight of the essential thing in this whole discussion, or, at least greatly belittling it, to wit: the generating of the Christlike spirit among men. It will be said by some excellent people that he is a Christian who is animated by a Christly spirit and who leads a Christly life, without any regard to constitutions, creeds, church membership, a professional ministry, or anything of the sort, and that therefore these are either of no essential importance, or, if at all allowable, the less there is of them the better. Now I am not inclined to deny or question the primary factor of this proposition, but I do question and venture to deny the conclusion inferentially drawn from it. The reasoning seems to me utterly fallacious and deceptive. There are good scholars who have never shared the advantages of schools, colleges, etc. Shall we therefore, demolish or undervalue all our educational institutions and set at nought the curriculum of study and discipline which they represent and employ in carrying forward their work? The objection ignores what may be termed the social power in humanity; the fact that in all movements affecting the welfare and happiness of considerable numbers of people, "union is strength"; the fact that in the progress of the world all great reforms, awakenings, uplifts, have had their standard-bearers, their leaders and champions, their distinguishing principles, ideas,

objects; and the fact that as the adherents of such reforms, etc. have been wisely associated, have had their forces well-marshalled, well-disciplined, well-directed, so has been their efficiency and ultimate success in accomplishing the work they have undertaken. The question in debate is not whether a man can live an honest, reverent, Christian life without Christ or the Christian confession, without religious association, church organization and discipline, etc., but whether or not the masses *will* do so, can be made to do so without the appliances and helps which the church in its organic character supplies; whether or not Christianity can be made a great working force in the world and go forward to the accomplishment of its divine mission without that organic system of affiliation, co-operation, and administration which I have endeavored to outline or suggest in this discourse. I take issue with my objectors on this question and cannot doubt that I am in the right. Moreover, I am confident that my view is in happy accord with the teaching and practice of the primitive church as recorded in the New Testament.

2. Still more emphatic objections to my positions will probably come from the opposite direction. Excellent people of a different type will deem me latitudinarian and lax in my proposed ways and methods of organized activity. Latitudinarian and lax I shall be charged with being in regard to the very nature of the church as a voluntary organization and not a divinely appointed institution; in regard to the ministry, as a body of teachers,

guides, helpers in the way of Christian living and not a hierarchy clothed with special authority and power; in regard to church membership, creeds, doctrines, ceremonies, ordinances, fellowship, discipline, etc. All this I expect but do not shrink from the ordeal. My appeal is "to the law and to the testimony," and at that tribunal I am sure of justification and approval. And I am no less sure that my conclusions cannot be invalidated at the court of rational inquiry. As I have discussed at length the numerous points involved and deemed exceptionable in Vol. II of this work, I need not go over the ground again at this time, but only remark that to give any of them the importance which these objectors claim for them would be to put the non-essential in place of the essential, make the conditional of equal importance with the absolute, thus compounding moral values, ministering to narrow conceptions of religious truth and duty, and disqualifying the church for the grand work of emancipating the human mind from all error and superstition and of bringing men into that larger, nobler, more perfect life of which Jesus of Nazareth is the type and example.

In meeting the objections referred to on the one hand and the other I do not depreciate individual excellence and worth in any instance under whatsoever conditions produced, nor deny the use of any means or methods which help to bring men in any age into submission to Christ and his law of love to God and man. I only seek to bring order out of the confusion of bygone times, exalt what

is indispensable to Christlikeness above all incidental and subordinate auxiliaries thereto, relieve the church of all needless conventionalism or ecclesiastical equipage, that it may go forth free and unencumbered to new victories on the battle-field of truth and to grander achievements than ever before for the cause of the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

DISCOURSE XVI.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”—1 *Pet.* iv. 10.

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”—1 *Cor.* xii. 4-6.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”—1 *Cor.* xiv. 40.

The seventh and last section of what I am pleased to denominate the absolute essentials of a true church relates to means and methods of carrying forward its distinctive work; or in other words its Administrative Policy. It contains six articles which I deem worthy of special exposition and comment, as is made to appear in the present Discourse; the already formulated order of sequence being observed.

1. “Members of the true church of Christ should hold frequent, regular, well-ordered meetings or convocations for mutual edification, religious service, and other purposes conducive of the nurture and growth of the divine life in their own souls and of the moral and spiritual improvement of society at large.”

A church conscious of its divinely appointed mission in the world and of its corresponding responsibilities will not be an indifferent, slumbering, inert body, but wide-awake, earnest, and diligent in every good word and work ; careful and determined, like the Master, "to be about the Father's business." It has a broad sphere of action in which to operate, and a great multitude and variety of duties to perform. Many of its affairs, dependent largely upon time, place, and prevailing circumstances, as well as specific means and methods of work, may and must be left to the judicious, conscientious discretion of its members for the time being, as questions of practical moment arise. But there are certain things so essential to true church life and usefulness as to be of permanent obligation, requiring constitutional or organic recognition and enjoinder. Among the most important of these is the custom of holding frequent, regular, properly arranged and governed assemblings together for distinctly religious purposes ; for exercises of devotion, for the quickening of the spiritual energies, for mutual counsel, exhortation, and fellowship, for fraternal admonition and discipline, for definite instruction concerning the truth in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Without such gatherings as these held at brief intervals, as often certainly as once a week, maintained and attended with scrupulous fidelity from year to year and from generation to generation, any church, however high and holy the plane it may at any period of its history have occupied, will decline in vigor and usefulness, and

lose its power of good in the community where it is located and in the world; personal virtue and piety among its members will degenerate and private and public demoralization will ultimately ensue. This is no matter of theoretical speculation, born of undue, irrational devotion to religious ideas and institutions, but of indisputable fact, as shown and abundantly testified to in the history of churches and of the world for hundreds and thousands of years. The vital importance of the activities under notice was understood and made serviceable by the early disciples, was urged by apostolic teaching and example, and is worthy of profound and never to be forgotten consideration.

In due proportion and for corresponding reasons must there be frequent or at least occasional and wisely planned gatherings for social converse and the extension of the boundaries of friendly interest, personal contact, and kindly feeling, as also for intellectual improvement and the broadening of the field of human investigation, thought, and knowledge in the vast realm of being. Works of charity and beneficence, ministrations to the needy and suffering, reforms in social and civil life, the promulgation of divine truth and the dissemination of principles of righteousness, missionary efforts of whatever kind or name, at home or in foreign lands — all these must be devised, provided for, and maintained, kept in vigorous and efficient activity, supplied with needed resources and withal carried on under an intelligent and comprehensive supervision; and this can be done only by

the agency of meetings of frequent occurrence, at which all matters pertaining thereto can be presented, discussed, thoroughly considered, and hence wisely determined. And even the more secular affairs of a church, its financial interests and technically business operations, require regular, well-ordered though more infrequent gatherings for proper, intelligent, wise oversight and administration. Much mischief follows from careless indifference and neglect in respect to these more external and worldly concerns pertaining to church life.

A word of caution may be needed lest that meetings and meeting-going, the assemblings of numbers, the formalities and exercises of religion, times and seasons of ecclesiastical observance, important as they are and essential to the highest prosperity and welfare of a church and of those connected with it, deserving recognition in its fundamental law, be made to assume too high and commanding a place in the thought and conduct of those concerned, being employed as a substitute for right living, for love of God and man, for Christlikeness; an atonement for overt sin or for neglect of those duties and obligations which are imposed upon all moral beings by the divine moral law and which distinguish true saintship in the calendar of heaven. To do this would be calamitous indeed, working immense harm to the church and to the cause of the great Nazarene.

2. "The ministry of the true church should commend itself to the laity and to the world at large by its intellectual competency, its high

spirituality and consecration to its work, its exemplary character and conduct, and its efficiency in prosecuting its holy mission."

In the very nature of things and as a necessary adjunct of their office, the ministry of the church must exert a predominating influence over those with whom they labor and exercise extraordinary power in the administration of the ecclesiastical polity. Their proper business is to lead and not follow their people in piety, virtue, and good works; not to live upon them but for them; not to be served by them, but to serve them in all holy and divine things. They are to perform the duties of their position, not as lords and masters, but as fellow-laborers for Jesus' sake and for the common welfare; not exercising dominion over their faith but acting as helpers of their joy. They must not be mere professionals, taking up their work as a business transaction, a worldly calling or craft whereby to secure a living or some sort of temporal advantage, but spiritually-minded, consecrated men and women, Christian by conviction and consciously called of God to the duties they have assumed to discharge.

They must moreover be intellectually competent; not necessarily learned in the curriculum of the schools or of the universities, but well-instructed in the thesis of a sound moral philosophy, in the principles of Christian truth and righteousness, in the word of God, in the powers and possibilities of the human soul and its immortal needs, and in the ways and means by which wanderers from the way

of life may be reclaimed and brought back to that ever-ascending path which shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Of mental vigor, of deep thought, of rich experience in the things of the kingdom must they be who stand on the towers of Zion, amply qualified to teach the eternal realities, to move, uplift, comfort, and strengthen the human heart, to reach and rescue imperiled souls and to make of the waste places of the earth sanctuaries of the living God.

Life quickens life in our human world, and there is no greater power for good among men than that of a pure, true, brave, strong, high-minded, divinely inspired personality, like that of Jesus, out of whom virtue went to awaken virtue in the hearts of the sin-smitten sons and daughters of men. Therefore must the approved ministry of the future church be exemplary in their character and conduct, in thought, word, and deed, in all the graces and excellences of the Christian life, illustrating in themselves, in their daily walk and conversation, the truth they inculcate, the virtue they commend, the love to God and man they enjoin as the sum and substance of the Gospel of Christ.

The true ministry must also be efficient in their work, proving themselves by their diligence, earnestness, courage, singleness of purpose, sound judgment, wisdom, power to reach the human heart and to turn men from darkness unto light and from sin unto holiness, good soldiers of Jesus Christ, skillful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

In these several particulars I have indicated the required character of the ministry of the true Christian church—the constant aim and purpose which they should each and all set before them as the mark of the prize of their high calling, unto which they should, in some good degree, have themselves attained—what, with due allowance for human imperfection and incidental errors or mistakes, the laity should peremptorily demand of those who claim a right to serve at the altar of Christian faith and profess to have committed to their keeping as a sacred trust the care and cure of souls. Such a ministry will in large measure realize to themselves and to the church and the world the grand ideal portrayed in the letters of the great Apostle Paul to Timothy, his “son in the faith” and his fellow-laborer in the work of extending the Gospel through Gentile lands and in evangelizing the world.

3. “There should be hearty and constant co-operation of ministers, subordinate officers, and members generally in the endeavor to promote the prosperity of the church, the betterment of humanity, and the extension of the domain of truth and righteousness throughout the earth.”

This proposition is so manifestly true in itself considered and so obviously vital to the prosperity and usefulness of the church that it requires little elucidation or defence. Anything like discord, alienation of feeling, personal animosity, factional bitterness and strife, must be disallowed and kept forever in abeyance or disastrous consequences

ensue, both to the church itself and to the cause for which it stands and for the promotion of which it was established and given a place in the divine order of the world. Nothing in the history of Christianity from the beginning has stained its fair fame, wrought harm to the vast interests it has in charge, made it the object of reprobation, satire, and contempt on the part of its foes, or shorn it of uplifting and redeeming power, so much as the inharmony, dissension, wrangling, contentiousness, open rupture and warfare that have prevailed under more or less obnoxious forms, within the boundaries and among the votaries of the church. And all this in utter recreancy to and practical contempt of the essential spirit of the Gospel, the plainest teachings of the Master and of his early messengers of truth and grace to mankind. Even careless indifference or indisposition to work with each other for laudable and important objects is detrimental to the common welfare and hence reprehensible. Unity, harmony, mutual sympathy and helpfulness, concert of effort, these are essential to true ecclesiastical order and the efficient administration of church affairs, under whatsoever circumstances and at all periods of time. "That they all may be one" was the last prayer of Jesus. Not one in thought, in opinion, in judgment; that were impossible in the very nature of things;—but one in spirit, in purpose, in efforts to overcome the sin and sorrow of the world and bring in the kingdom of God; that is possible, and not only possible but obligatory upon the true followers of Jesus. "Let

your conversation," that is, your behavior, your whole course of life, said the author of the epistle to the Philippians, "be as becometh the gospel of Christ * * * that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving *together* for the faith of the gospel." This is wholesome doctrine upon the matter under notice and worthy of universal application in the church.

4. "Wholesome discipline and good order in all departments of church life should be sedulously maintained."

The indispensable importance of definite, well-understood rules of order and discipline has been sufficiently explained and defended in a previous sermon and need not be reconsidered. But rules are not self-executive and are of little value unless they are conscientiously and faithfully regarded. So far as they relate to methods of operation, to the more external affairs of the church, indifference to or neglect of them leads to confusion, thriftlessness, and inefficiency, and gives occasion for distrust, suspicion, recrimination, and many kindred ills. So far as they relate to the character and conduct of members, their observance is essential to the purity and efficiency of membership, to harmony and real fellowship, and to hearty and cordial co-operation for the accomplishment of the great objects for which the church exists. "How can two walk together except they be agreed" upon the great fundamentals of truth and duty? Oil and water will not mix, nor can incongruous elements in any associative body so combine as to act

freely and harmoniously with each other to common ends. There must be in a true church some standard of admission, some way of preventing the incoming of unworthy or discordant elements, some way of relieving the body of such as perchance may have gained an entrance therein. Otherwise there will be moral and social confusion and misrule, disloyalty to the high standard of a true church and to Christ. But this order and discipline is to be exercised and maintained impartially and justly, yet kindly and beneficently "in charity to all and with malice towards none."

5. "There should be uncompromising fidelity to acknowledged essentials on the part of all members, while perfect liberty is allowed in all other respects."

This article cannot be too earnestly, candidly, or thoroughly pondered and treasured in the heart. It makes a broad and notable distinction between the essentials and non-essentials in religion; between what is inherently vital to piety and virtue, intrinsic in Christianity and what is incidental thereto; between the glorious structure of a consummate manhood and womanhood in Christ Jesus and the scaffolding—the means, methods, helps, by which that structure is reared. The essentials, as I specify them, are based upon divine principles, are an expression of the everlasting truth of things and hence inviolable and forever obligatory; cannot be disregarded or set at naught without impinging upon the eternal divine order, without open disloyalty to God. While the non-essentials, as I term them, have no such firm and imperishable bases,

stand in no such indefeasable relation to eternal realities, but are incidental and contingent thereto and so of secondary importance and value; their validity and worth depending upon time, place, circumstance, general or special utility and a great variety of adventitious considerations. The article in review implies that every essential represents some great principle or first truth of the moral and spiritual world; such as the being of God, the supremacy of the divine law of righteousness, the ruinous nature of sin, the fact of retribution, the idea of immortality, etc., and requires that these be insisted upon and regarded without qualification or compromise. It also implies that there are certain exercises, privileges, duties, customs, etc., which have no such bases or original claim upon men, but whose validity and obligatoriness rest upon their fitness and competency to serve human need and welfare, to promote virtue and holiness in the souls of men, to further the cause of truth and right in the world, to aid in carrying the plans of God forward to their consummation. Among these non-essentials are forms of organization, methods of action, special objects of effort, rites, ordinances, times and places of worship, and everything of a like nature and use.

Now my contention and what this article maintains is that each and every church built upon sure foundations, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, must and will recognize and definitely affirm certain great fundamental ideas or truths of the Christian religion and steadfastly uphold and

abide by them with unfaltering fidelity under all possible conditions and circumstances ; but that in everything else pertaining to ecclesiastical concerns, in the way of organization, administration, or action, there shall be the most perfect liberty of thought, feeling, opinion, judgment, and conduct. And this liberty itself is to be regarded as an essential of equal importance and obligation with any and all others that may be incorporated into the creed or platform of any church. None of the recognized non-essentials are to be condemned as evil *per se*, nor proscribed as useless, nor treated with irreverence or contempt, but left to stand or fall upon their own merits, as determined by the free choice and judgment of individual members or of the whole body of the church. And no one is to be impugned in motive or in loyalty to Christ, condemned or anathematized for maintaining his own liberty of thought and action upon these matters, against the individual or combined judgment of his fellow-members in the church. This article relieves those who adopt it from the burden of antiquated and barren dogmas and speculations, holds them fast in their allegiance to the eternal verities, and secures to them "the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free."

6. "Due regard should be paid to gradation of discipleship and to the successive steps of Christian progress from the youngest child and least advanced convert to the loftiest and most noble saint ; great care, however, being taken never to lower the standard of pure practical Christianity."

Two very important duties are acknowledged and enjoined in this declaration. The first relates to the law of growth in the Christian life and to the institution of adequate means and methods of promoting it. Christian discipleship is not born full-grown and perfect but infantile and weak, to be developed and matured by successive processes of instruction, nurture, and regenerative transformation along lines of ever-ascending progress towards perfection. And these processes are to be provided for and carried forward under church supervision and as a part of its established administrative policy. The church is in important respects a school for the training and culture of men, women, and children in truth, righteousness, and holy living—for the development of character in those who share its privileges and advantages according to the pattern outlined and exhibited in the New Testament. Its works in this department of it begins with the children and youth over whom it has care, or with persons of maturer years animated by selfish, worldly, sinful motives and ambitions, both of which classes are alike ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God and unmindful of what pertains to the higher and diviner life of the soul, placing them under influences and tuition suited to their needs, implanting in the susceptible and willing soil of their hearts the seed of the kingdom, and watching its germination and early unfolding with unfaltering solicitude and care. By agencies wisely adapted to the development of the spiritual faculties of those just starting on the

upward way within its immediate jurisdiction will the church provide for their gradual, healthful growth in grace and the knowledge of God until they attain to that measure of virtue and piety which qualifies them for entrance into its full membership and for the enjoyment of all the rights and prerogatives belonging thereto; thus becoming organically "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."

A corresponding course or system of training and development would be instituted and operated with respect to interested parties and converts in the outside world and in the formation and conduct of missionary stations wherever it might be deemed wise to establish them. New churches could be founded with safety and promise of success only after such an inductive course or system had been pursued for a sufficient time to test the fitness of candidates for the grave responsibilities involved. Nothing could be gained but much lost to the church itself and to the cause of pure Christianity by multiplying organizations and giving them the Christian name, the membership of which was composed of persons animated by the spirit of this world and committed, in good part or wholly, to the habits, customs, laws, institutions, and governmental policies of existing society. A radical reform of church life can be effected only by coming out and being separate from everything that conflicts with the spirit, principles, and precepts of the Master.

And hence the necessity of insisting upon the second great duty enjoined by the article under

notice, namely, "never to lower the standard of pure, practical Christianity"; which is for the individual Christlikeness of spirit, conduct, and character, and for the church in its associated capacity, brotherhood, co-operation, a new order of life, the kingdom of God. The temptation to depart from this rule is very great and difficult to withstand. The early church could not withstand it for a long period. And many churches of later date starting well and running well for a season, have at length been overcome by the seductive power of wealth, respectability, love of applause, wordliness, political ambition, martial glory, and sunk to a common level, shorn of much of their power to uplift and save mankind. Their salt lost its savor, their light became dim, their strength turned to weakness. Retaining the Christian name, the Christian spirit, the Christian life in large measure departed. Hence the little progress true, pure Primitive Christianity has made in the world. Hence the slow coming of the kingdom of God to the earth. Let the folly, the danger, the recreancy to duty, involved in abandoning or lowering the standard, as illustrated in the example of the primitive church and of a multitude of instances since that date, as well as in the history of Christendom, be a warning to all those who may in any coming age or time seek to inaugurate and perpetuate a regenerate church and make it worthy of its name. Let them set their standard high and maintain it against all the allurements of the world, against the temptations of flesh and sense, against the

flattering promises of wealth or fame or power or earthly glory to the end, in sterling honesty, in uncompromising fidelity, in unsullied honor, before God and His holy angels, till the mission of the church be fulfilled and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Here I leave the exposition and defence of my proposed platform upon which the church of the new dispensation must in my judgment be built, proceeding in my next Discourse to a detailed and careful examination of the principal creeds, confessions, statements of faith, etc. which have been formulated and adopted in the past, and which are still venerated and held authoritative in the larger and more commanding denominations of the professing Christian world.

DISCOURSE XVII.

EXAMINATION OF THE NICENE CREED.

“Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” — 1 *Thess.* v. 21.

“Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” — 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20.

The most ancient creed or confession of faith to be found in the annals of the nominal Christian church was the one formulated and adopted by what is commonly termed the first Ecumenical Council held at Nice or Nicea, a city of Bithynia, Asia Minor, A. D. 325. That body was convened by order of Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome, soon after he became the acknowledged head of the ecclesiastical affairs of Christendom, for the purpose of putting an end to the so-called Arian controversy then prevailing far and wide, and causing much bitterness and violence even on both sides. That purpose was fully accomplished by establishing Athanasianism as orthodoxy or the true faith of all believers in Christ, and banishing Arius as a dangerous heretic to Illyria, a heathen province on the northern borders of Greece, now within the territory of the Austrian Empire. Of the merits or demerits of that Council or of its

general doings I have no occasion to say anything more than will be necessary in the consideration of the system of doctrine which was there framed and made authoritative. That system was re-affirmed after certain assumed improvements had been made in it by a second general Council at Constantinople, A. D. 381. Thence it has come down through intervening ages, haloed with rays of ecclesiastical reverence and adulation, unto our own day, bearing a name derived from the place of its inception and well known in the religious world and in religious literature. The full text of the document in which it was formulated is here given.

THE NICENE CREED.

“I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. And born of the Father, before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made; consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. And was incarnated by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; AND HE WAS MADE MAN: was crucified also under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, and was buried. And the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. And he ascended into heaven. Sits at the right hand of the Father. And he is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Church. I confess one Baptism, for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON.

Clause 1. "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." This is sound doctrine, and objectionable only on account of indefiniteness and insufficiency of statement. It is liable to be misunderstood in various ways; to be given narrow, gross, irrational, diversified, contradictory meanings. "There is one God." To be sure; but is he alone self-existent and strictly one? He is "the Father Almighty." Certainly; but is he the *universal* Father—the Father of all mankind? Is almighty-ness His only chief attribute? Is he not infinite and all-perfect? as truly so and much more adorably in *Wisdom* and *Love* as in Power? Furthermore, is He an organic being, anthropomorphic in form, but of surpassing grandeur and majesty, inhabiting some given locality in the celestial empyrean, and journeying to and fro in the vast immensities of space as His presence may be needed in the providential ordering of the universe? Or is He absolute and uncorruptible Spirit, pervading all things and possessing a mental, moral, and spiritual personality, self-conscious, active, and manifestable in every part and at all points of creation's immeasurable domain? My own platform or statement of belief has none of the defects and objectionable characteristics thus indicated, but avoids and precludes them all. It sets forth the nature, attributes, and perfections of Deity, and His relations to the whole universe of being in entire harmony with the dictates of reason, the principles of sound

philosophy, and the testimonies of Jesus and his Apostles as recorded in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Clause 2. "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God." This is true, sound, Scriptural doctrine, if properly interpreted and understood. But as formulated is, like clause 1, obscure and liable to perversion and misapprehension. The phrase "only-begotten Son of God," was regarded by the Nicene prelates in a gross, literal sense, and has been so regarded by multitudes of professed Christians unto this day; and so regarded has been given a false meaning—a meaning opposed to facts and to the real teaching of the sacred word. In the New Testament sense the term "only-begotten" expresses pre-eminence, supremacy, the highest rank of filial relationship, and not exclusiveness of such relationship. Thus in the book of Hebrews, Abraham is said to have offered up Isaac, "his only-begotten son." And yet Abraham had Ishmael and other male children. And Paul in his letter to the Romans tells them that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God." And Jesus in teaching the universal Fatherhood of God also teaches by necessary implication the universal sonship of mankind. My own statement concerning Christ as found on page 200 affords a much truer and more Scriptural view of the divine man, Jesus, and presents the all-important practical character of true faith in this great Son of God, concerning which the Nicene creed is objectionably silent.

Clause 3. "And born of the Father, before all ages." This is either a senseless solecism or an inexplicable scholastic enigma ; in either case having no place in a confession of faith for the consideration and acceptance of intelligent, rational beings. "Before all ages" is a phrase that has no meaning in a theory of existence which involves an unbegun eternity. Or if it has a meaning as used in the instance before us, it is that Christ was never born at all but always existed. Whatever way the declaration is regarded it is rhetorically, scientifically, philosophically, void of signification and hence an inexcusable juggle of words having no value whatever. All such statements are ruled out of the court of honest, intelligent inquiry by my affirmation that "Mere metaphysical abstractions, scholastic subtleties, and cloudy mysticisms should be excluded from all expositions or formularies of religious truth."

Clause 4. "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made ; consubstantial to the Father." Were this predicated of the all-comprehending, communicable Divine Spirit, sometimes called the Logos, the Holy Ghost, etc., wherewith the man Jesus was anointed, quickened, and inspired to constitute him the Christ, it would express, though in cumbersome verbalism, a grand truth ; with the exception of the phrase "begotten, not made" which should read "neither begotten nor made." But the statement as it stands confounds the human personality with the indwelling Father, who, according to the plain testimony of

Jesus, spoke through him and wrought by him. (See *John* xiv. 10.) The human and divine must not be thus confounded, creating a mystery where there is none and so befogging the understanding as well as falsifying the facts in the case. But this has been one of the great theological mistakes of Christendom, first made by the Nicean Council and perpetuated unto this day, corrupting the minds of millions of sincere believers in the church, who count it a deadly heresy to hold to the strict humanity of Jesus and yet to the absolute Divinity of his official Christhood.

Clause 5. "By whom all things were made." This clause, though having warrant in the letter of the New Testament (*Col.* i. 16.), as it appears in the creed contradicts what has been stated before and bewilders rather than edifies the understanding of men. It had been previously affirmed that the Father Almighty was the "Maker of all things visible and invisible." And now to declare that all things were made by Jesus Christ as their primal source and creator, is to make the Father and the Son identical and undistinguishable so far as the act of creation was concerned, a conclusion which the most conservative and dogmatic Trinitarian would not in our day accept. The Scriptures, from which the clause in question is derived, must be highly figurative representations of the exalted character and office of God's dear Son, or must refer to the divine Logos—the creative wisdom of the universe, which, inhering in the Supreme One, operates throughout immensity to execute

His holy will and fulfill His vast designs; more especially as it dwells in and actuates and works through living souls, and most of all in and through the great Son of man, Son of God as well. In one or the other of these senses only can there be any rational or Scriptural basis for the statement under examination; the one implied in the Nicene pronouncement being wholly inadmissible and unworthy of acceptance.

Clause 6. "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven." Not from some celestial abode or locality in the upper airs, but from the grand realm of moral and spiritual verities, the heaven of divinely appointed agencies and ministries for the progress and final redemption of humanity. Only in this sense can I accept this portion of the creed in review.

Clause 7. "And was incarnated by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, AND HE WAS MADE MAN." The doctrine of incarnation by the Holy Ghost as here set forth, or of what is usually termed the immaculate conception, I regard as chimerical and misleading. It is manifestly contrary to the laws of divine order in the procession of the generations, as attested by human experience in all ages of history, Moreover, I maintain that it has no warrant even in the letter of authentic Scripture annals. I am convinced from arguments which I cannot reproduce here that the narratives prefacing the real Gospels of Matthew and Luke upon which the doctrine is based are apocryphal and unworthy of acceptance. Furthermore, neither

Jesus nor his Apostles, so far as the Scripture records show, ever made any account of the doctrine whatever, much less taught that it was of vital importance; nay they did not ever mention it as a historical fact. While the former repeatedly puts forth high claims to divine indwelling power and authority, and insists on being believed in as the Christ, he never in a single instance does this on the ground of or with reference to any peculiarities of conception, birth, or parentage. Nor do any of the immediate teachers and promulgators of his religion. They do not so much as allude to such an abnormal occurrence as known to them. I cannot therefore regard it as having any place among the essentials of a vital Christian faith. The true doctrine of the incarnation or indwelling in Jesus of the divine Logos, contemplates what was characteristic of him from the time of his baptism, but settles nothing in regard to his previous super-earthly endowments, whatever they may have been, and no creed should presume to do so. The exact measure of his Christly endowments and authority before he began his public ministry is of comparatively little importance; it was what the Logos said and did through him in its plenary manifestation that chiefly concerns his disciples and mankind generally.

Clauses 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. "Was crucified also under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. And he ascended into heaven. Sits at the right hand of the Father. And he is to come

again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end." The first three of these declarations may be assented to as substantially true to the facts of the case, but are not to be urged or imposed upon believers in a dogmatic, imperious manner; while the others, important and valuable if rightly understood, are exceedingly liable to be misinterpreted and given a false meaning. The statement that Christ sits at the right hand of the Father may be taken in the absurd literal sense and so made to teach that the infinite and all-pervading God is an organic personality occupying a veritable throne in some given locality of the universe like an earthly monarch occupying a chair of state, whence He administers the affairs of His vast and complex government; and that Jesus, who is also still an actual organism, has a place by His right hand side. Whereas, the term, "right hand," in such a representation is to be regarded metaphorically and spiritually, as denoting the highest degree of honor, approbation, and glory.

Again, how has the statement "he is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead," been made by a narrow, arbitrary literalism to inculcate sundry most irrational notions and to disgrace the pure religion of the New Testament! Especially has it done this in respect to what are known in the history of the church and in general religious literature as the doctrine of the "Second Coming of Christ" in person to the earth, that of the "General Judgment" which, it is assumed, will be held much after the manner of earthly tribunals at

some definite date of the unknown future, and others akin thereto. These doctrines have been deduced with presumptuous assurance from certain highly figurative texts of the Bible in which the word *come* or its equivalent holds a central place and is given its common signification. Whereas it is a word of very flexible and versatile meaning both in its original Hebrew or Greek prototype and in its translated form, applying alike to the most literal, physical movement hitherward and to the most figurative, spiritual descent of grace and power from on high. To mistake one of these applications for the other or to use them indiscriminately is to juggle with words and fall into lamentable error. That Christ has come to the children of men since he dwelt in the flesh and went about Palestine preaching the Gospel, that he does come today and will come in the ages ahead is to my mind certain. But it is not in a personal, bodily form as aforetime, but as a spiritual presence and force, to renew the life of the world and extend the realm of righteousness, brotherhood, peace, and love upon the earth. The same spiritual interpretation and latitude of meaning is to be given to the additional explanatory phrase, "to judge the living and the dead." That is, Christ, as a representative of the eternal Father and a revealer of the divine truth, in his spiritual relations to mankind, becomes a judge to approve, honor, and reward the good, and to blame, condemn, and pronounce sentence against the evil. The principles of God's moral government, which he proclaimed

when on earth and which he represents, constitute the standard by which human character and conduct are tried in this and all worlds now and evermore.

And so of the phrase, "of whose kingdom there shall be no end." Very true, if by his kingdom we understand the supremacy of those divine, eternal principles which he enunciated and urged as the true impregnable bases of all thought and conduct in individual, social, and civil life, and with which he was so closely identified. But if by his kingdom Christ's personal rule or authority is meant, the phrase is to be taken with considerable qualification, as Paul very plainly shows when he says, "Then cometh the end when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father." "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 28. This statement is in my judgment far better than that of the Nicene formula. And in this form I heartily accept the doctrine involved.

Clauses 13, 14, 15, 16. "And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets." These clauses I group together as I did the preceding five because they are closely related to each other, treating as they do of one common subject, the Holy Ghost. As they stand and as they were intended to be under-

stood by the Nicene fathers, the doctrine they embody is neither Scriptural, rational, or true. It assumes that the Holy Ghost is absolutely a Divine Person, co-ordinate with the Father and the Son, the Lord and Giver of Life, to be adored and glorified accordingly. But there is not a single passage in the Bible which thus describes what is termed the Holy Ghost. It is uniformly represented as the outflowing divine spirit — a manifestation or communicable part of God Himself, whereby He becomes a conscious living presence in the soul of man and in human life. It carries with it to be sure a certain sort of mental and moral personality, but it is a derived, subordinate personality, not an aboriginal, independent one. The Holy Ghost is never in the Scriptures regarded as wholly separable from God, the Father, nor yet as co-equal with Him in originating or creating any thing. It is simply an emanation from God, His manifestivè agency in the administration of the affairs of the spiritual universe — in informing, inspiring, and qualifying for their appointed work, Prophet, Apostle, and even Christ himself. Abundant Scripture quotations might be transferred to these pages in support of this view, but space will not allow. Nor is it necessary with intelligent readers of the Old and New Testaments.

Clause 17. “And one Holy Catholic and Apostolical Church.” Whatever truth there may be in an abstract, spiritual sense in this dictum it is in no wise an essential element of New Testament faith. As it stands in the creed and has been held by

the devotees of that creed it is a sheer ecclesiastical assumption, fruitful of bigotry, schism, religious warfare and persecution. The claim made for it is unreasonable and preposterous. There is a sense in which there is one holy, catholic, Apostolic church: a body composed of those of all beliefs, in all lands, throughout all ages, who, under the leadership of Jesus, cherish his spirit, share his fellowship, do his work, and build up his kingdom in the world. But it is not to this church that the creedmakers of Nice and their followers refer, and their declaration merits only denial and refutation on the part of all true disciples of the Nazarene.

Clause 18. "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins." As interpreted by the exposition of the Nicene confession this teaches peremptorily that water baptism puts away a person's sins and renders him regenerate. This is not New Testament doctrine at all. John the forerunner of Christ indicated the true view of baptism when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." And Peter sets the matter of water baptism in its true light when he declares its use to be "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience towards God." The plain testimony of the great teacher as well as that of Paul and other New Testament authors is that regeneration is effected only by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is at best but a sign or symbol of inward purification, but it is often only a sign with no reality behind it.

Clauses 19, 20. "And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." There is nothing intrinsically objectionable in this complex statement of the doctrine of Immortality, save perhaps its general indefiniteness and consequent liability to provoke interminable speculation on the nature of the resurrection of the dead and the conditions and characteristics of life in the world to come, which my own manifesto, heretofore given, in large measure precludes by its greater precision and completeness. (See page 184.)

I have thus concluded my analysis of the Nicene confession of faith, comparing it in certain respects with my own, and am content to submit the result to the considerate judgment of those interested in the great questions of Christian life who may come after me. In my next discourse I shall examine other formularies of doctrine which have been held in high regard in certain branches of the church during many centuries of its history. Meantime may the Holy Spirit of truth enlighten us and guide us into all truth; yea and forevermore.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE APOSTLES' AND ATHANASIAN CREEDS; ANALYZED AND COMPARED.

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”—1 *Cor.* ii. 12, 13.

The Apostles’ Creed, so named, which I am to notice first in this discourse, is of uncertain origin and date. Next to that of Nicea, already considered, it is, without much doubt, the oldest formulated statement of belief known to Christendom. For many centuries it was supposed to antedate the Nicene confession, adopted in the year 325, being deemed the production of those early promulgators of the Gospel whose name it bears, each of whom was said to have contributed one of its clauses. “Very likely its author was willing it should be thus regarded, as were multitudes of church dignitaries and their blind satellites after him. “All, however,” says Mosheim, “who have the least knowledge of antiquity look upon this opinion as entirely false and destitute of all foundation.” “There is much reason and judgment,” he adds, “in the opinion of those who think this creed was not all composed at once, but from small begin-

nings was imperceptibly augmented in proportion to the growth of heresy, and according to the exigencies and circumstances of the church, from whence it was designed to banish the errors that daily arose."

But from whatever source or period of history it originated it did not appear in ecclesiastical annals until the latter part of the fourth century, and was not admitted to general use in the church, according to usually received authorities, for a century or more afterwards. It had then assumed the form in which it long held an important place in the Roman Catholic communion, as it also has in the Episcopalian system of faith, and in which it is best known to the religious world. It reads as follows:—

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

"I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting. Amen.

REMARKS.

This creed differs so little from the one framed at Nicea that most of my analytical and comparative comments upon that are applicable to the one now under examination. Of the two the

present one is least objectionable; but it is astonishing to see how even this magnifies unimportant items of doctrine, asserts questionable dogmas, abbreviates essential principles or ideas, and omits everything in the department of personal and social righteousness; as if the eternal principles of duty were not as fundamental to true Christian faith as scholastic theological propositions, and much more so than several of the specified facts of Gospel history. But in this last respect all the ancient and most of the later statements of belief are strikingly alike.

There are however three noteworthy particulars in the Apostle's Creed that are not found in the Nicene confession, viz.: Christ's descent into hell, the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins; though possibly the last of these may have been implied in the doctrine of "one baptism for the remission of sins." As to the first of these three propositions or statements, I may frankly confess that I believe on the testimony of Peter and Paul that Jesus, in the prosecution of his mediatorial mission, "went and preached to the spirits in prison;" that is, entered Hades and carried on his saving work among the disobedient and unholy ones there; and that I regard the fact important in its place, as I do the fact of his baptism, or temptation, or transfiguration; but I see no necessity or propriety in ranking any of these incidents of his experience as essential to a religious system, or in giving them a place among the prescribed articles of Christian faith.

I believe also in "the communion of saints;" that is, in the spiritual oneness and fellowship, the sympathy and co-operation of all Christlike souls wheresoever and whensoever existing; but I cannot regard the matter of sufficient importance in the work of human redemption or in the proper organization and administration of a Christian church to make formal mention of it in the covenanted platform or constitution of such a church. And I would say the same in regard to the doctrine of "the forgiveness of sins." It is sublimely true, but not vital to character, nor fundamental to church loyalty, efficiency, and success. Were these truths, as I hold them to be, denied or contemptuously treated, I should contend for them most earnestly as I understand them to be set forth in the Scriptures and as they seem to me to enter into the moral frame-work of the world. And I grant that they have relations and bearings in respect to the divine government and to the virtue, holiness, and happiness of mankind which might render it highly expedient, and even a sacred duty under some circumstances, for the church to make some affirmatory declaration concerning them or bear its testimony against the rejection or disparagement of them as morally wrong, mischievous, and reprehensible. Farther than this in support or in exaltation of them I could not in reason or good conscience go.

With these brief observations upon the Apostles' creed I pass to a more elaborate examination of what is known in ecclesiastical history as

THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

This, beyond all question, is a masterly production, and worthy of the genius of the celebrated patriarch and polemic whose name it bears. Yet well-informed ecclesiastical historians, do not accord it to Athanasius himself, but to one of his most intellectual, acute, subtle, profound disciples, unknown in the annals of the church. Some sectarian zealots have claimed that it was drawn up as early as the fourth century but without the least shadow of authority. Notices of it appeared in the seventh century, but it seems to have gained little foothold in the church before the tenth and perhaps not till the eleventh century. It first came into favor in France, extending thence ere long throughout Western Europe and finally to all parts of Christendom. It is an accepted formulary of faith in the Roman and Greek churches, and in the church of England it is regarded as of equal authority with the Apostles' and Nicene statements, being repeated in due form at certain designated festivals. It is the most dogmatic, uncompromising, assumptive, and metaphysically recondite of all creeds, ancient and modern alike, as the transcription of it in these pages will show. Let the interested inquirer read and ponder it with thoughtful, discriminating care. It is as follows :—

“Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.

“Which faith except every one do keep entire and inviolate, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

“Now the Catholic faith is this—that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

“Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

“For one is the person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost.

“But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

“Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

“The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Ghost is uncreated.

“The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

“The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

“And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

“As also they are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

“In like manner, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

“And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

“So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

“And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

“So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord.

“And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

“For, as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods or three Lords.

“The Father is made of no one, neither created nor begotten.

“The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.

“The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

“So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not Three Holy Ghosts.

“And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less; but the whole three persons are co-eternal to one another and co-equal.

“So that in all things, as has been already said above, the Unity is to be worshipped in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity.

“He, therefore, that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

“Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Now, the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and Man.

“He is God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the world; and he is Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world.

“Perfect God and perfect Man; of a rational soul, and human flesh subsisting.

“Equal to the Father according to his Godhead, and less than the Father according to his manhood.

“Who, although he be both God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ.

“One, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God.

“One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

“For as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.

“Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

“He ascended into heaven; he sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

“At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works.

“And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

“This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully and steadfastly, he cannot be saved.

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, one God, world without end. AMEN.

REMARKS.

This is undoubtedly the most complete statement of Trinitarian theology ever made. Like all others of a similar character, it consists largely of positively asserted propositions, which the most learned doctors of that theology acknowledge to be inexplicable by human reason and inapprehensible by the human understanding. Yet it must be believed or endless tortures will ensue. It is based on four fundamental errors. (1) That Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are co-equal with the Father. (2) That the Holy Ghost is a person as really as are either the Father or the Son. (3) That persons are not distinct beings but conjoined and intermingled. (4) That the person of Christ is both God and man by virtue of the incarnation. These theses have no foundation in the Scriptures and it is only by a forced interpretation of a few texts or by unwarranted scholastic inference that they can be made to seem scriptural. And this must be done in contradiction of plain passages to the contrary and of the whole tenor of both testaments. Let us examine the errors in the order named.

(1) "Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are co-equal with the Father." Now there are many Scripture texts which teach or plainly imply that the Logos, or indwelling spirit, which made the man Jesus in any proper sense the Christ, was absolutely divine; that is, consubstantial with the essence of God the Father, and of course co-eternal with him, as consisting of properties inherent in him. The same is true of the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit. But when we seek for passages to prove the alleged co-equality of the Logos and Holy Ghost with the Father they are nowhere to be found. On the contrary these are uniformly and unequivocally represented as emanating and coming forth from the Father to manifest his nature, attributes, perfections, purposes, and will—as sent, directed, empowered to act altogether in subservience to his pleasure. Thus Jesus, when accused by the Jews of making himself equal with God because he called him his Father, said: "Is it not written in your law. I said ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word [Logos] of God came and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemist because I said I am the Son of God?" (*John* x. 35, 36.) As to the Holy Ghost, it is, with rare exceptions, spoken of in a similar way, as sent, given, poured out, etc.—as coming from some source back of itself. Whereas, God the Father is in no single instance represented in that way. Why not, if he is only the co-equal of

the others? Why should one of these assumed co-equals be put before the others and described as greater in authority than they except for the reason that he is so, and that the assumption is utterly without foundation.

The creed says: "In this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less; but the whole three persons are co-eternal to one another and "co-equal." And yet otherwise it says: "The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten." "The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." How is it that the first of these co-eternal, co-equal persons is unbegotten, then begets the second, while the third proceeds from the other two? Such statements are plainly contradictory and nullify each other, proving that the doctrine they are designed to set forth is a stupendous error, baseless and vain.

2. "The Holy Ghost is a person as really as are the Father or the Son." In the gospels the Father and Son are unmistakably regarded as possessing personality; the latter subordinately to the former. In a few instances the Holy Ghost is spoken of metaphorically in the masculine gender, but usually as an impersonal, communicable, divine afflatus, influence, or energy of the infinite spirit. A large number of texts might be adduced in support of this view of which I give a few examples, to wit: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan and was led by the

spirit into the wilderness." (*Luke* iv. 1.) "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (*John* xx. 22.) "I will pray the Father and he will give you another Comforter, * * * Even the Spirit of Truth." "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost." (*John* xiv. 16, 17, 26.) "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." (*Acts* ii. 4.) "God annointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." "On the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (*Acts*. x. 28, 44, 45.) "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (*Rom.* xv. 16.) "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." (*2 Cor.* xiii. 14.) These passages and a multitude of others of a similar import show conclusively that Jesus and the New Testament writers regarded the Holy Ghost as a divine force, energy, or spirit, emanating from God and overshadowing, animating, vitalizing its subject—a manifestation of God in human experience—an expression of God's communicable essence or intrinsic nature.

3. "Persons are not distinct beings but conjoined and intermingled." This is one of the fundamental errors of the creed under review. According to its teachings there are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and "the whole three persons are co-eternal to one another and co-equal." They blend together in one Supreme Being, which is repugnant to all intelligible ideas of

personality, and offensive to an enlightened understanding. The inventors of the Trinitarian hypothesis were sorely puzzled in trying to evade the charge of the unperverted primitive Christians as well as of the Jews, that they were teaching a plurality of gods. To meet the charge they pleaded vehemently that they still held to one and only one God, who existed in three persons, but not in three separate entities or beings. But this did not satisfy their accusers, and from that day to this no human mind has been able to conceive how this could be, nor will it ever be able to do so. Even those who hold that view do not undertake to explain it but freely admit that it is inexplicable—a mystery incapable of apprehension by the human mind. In the very nature of things a doctrine thus defiant of the noblest attributes of human nature must in due time be abandoned and a return take place to the simple but rational and unquestionable teaching of the New Testament in this respect.

4. Another gross assumption and error of the Athanasian creed is that Jesus is both God and man by reason of what is termed the incarnation. That there was perfect unity between the divine and human in Christ is to my mind clearly taught in the Gospels as a sublime fact, and was demonstrated by his life, character, death, resurrection, and ascension to glory. But this is not the doctrine of a compound personality as assumed in this and other Trinitarian confessions, which is, that Christ was a divine Person in the Godhead, begotten of the Father from all eternity, co-existent and

co-equal with the Father; that he took on the form and the attributes of a man when conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, thus becoming both God and man; in which duplex character he wrought his work in this world, ascended up on high, and dwells in majesty and glory forevermore. But do the Scriptures teach anything of this sort, or in any rational or spiritual interpretation of them justify the claims that are made in this behalf? I answer confidently, No! and challenge refutation of my denial.

Again; is not the personality ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth in the sacred record strictly human in its original nature and capability? Most assuredly. And if the divine Logos, the holy Spirit of God, had not indwelt in him—had not anointed and possessed him to a degree far exceeding that of other men he would and could never have been in any proper sense the Christ, the Saviour of the world. Now then did the whole divine Logos become incarnate in Jesus? Was it not omnipresent with the Infinite Father throughout the immensity of being even while it was so clearly manifesting itself in and through the Christ of Galilee? And is that Christ now in glory anything more than a perfect human being, infilled and vivified by the same Logistic Spirit to the highest extent of which such a being is capable. And will not this be the case when he shall have delivered up the mediatorial kingdom to God, even the Father, having subdued all things unto himself, “that God may be all in all?” The plain testimony of the divine

word spoken both by Jesus and his Apostles is conclusive upon these several points, disproving beyond all question the assumption that Jesus Christ is both God and man in any such sense as the creed-makers assert — in any such sense as that which differentiates him from humanity at large and makes him altogether dissimilar in nature and possibility to the common order of mankind.

Having considered at length what I deem the four fundamental errors of the Athanasian Creed which characterize and vitiate the greater number of its postulates, I proceed to notice briefly a few of its other affirmations. Passing over what is stated concerning the sufferings of Christ for our salvation, his descent into hell, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his coming to judge the world, the resurrection of all men with their bodies, etc., for the reason that these themes have been already sufficiently treated and disposed of in the examination of the Nicene and Apostle's Creeds, I take up a few other important points.

1. The creed under notice contains this explicit and very important declaration, "And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire." It is a singular and most noteworthy fact that this is the only item in this long statement of faith which even intimates that personal righteousness is of any importance or value as an element or condition of human welfare, in time or in eternity, or as a Christian duty or a requirement under the government

of God. And this it does in a most general, ambiguous, indefinite way. Out of forty paragraphs composing this assumed-to-be comprehensive and sufficient statement of essential divine truth put forth as an adequate basis of the Christian church, only one has any direct reference to character, a true and holy life, obedience to the divine law, likeness to God. And we might question whether this one was designed to have any such interpretation; whether the phrase "have done good" was not intended to characterize those who had made avowal of the prescribed belief in the Trinity, etc., rather than those who had kept the law of love to God and man; and whether "they that have done evil" was not meant to apply to the rejectors of that belief rather than to the unjust, the self-seeking, and the vile. Be that as it may, the one thing above and before all others that appears in this creed, is, that belief in it is the indispensable condition of salvation, the only ground of acceptance with God. And the doing of good must be something consistent with such belief, growing out of it perhaps, and the doing of evil something hostile thereto, caused by rejecting it.

However this be understood, it is beyond all question that according to this creed those adjudged to have done evil in the final assizes are to be sent into everlasting fire, as their irretrievable destiny. A veil of Scripture literalism disowned by the best Bible scholars [And rejected in the New Version.—*Ed.*] is thus thrown over the fast-dying dogma of endless punishment, the irrational-

ity, mercilessness, injustice, and unscripturalness of which I have in a former volume of this series exposed and demonstrated beyond fear of refutation. (Vol. I, Discourses XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII.) I will not repeat what I have there stated, but simply ask my readers to behold the representation which this creed gives of the results of Christ's mission and of the final consummation of all things under the government of God. A comparatively few of the unnumbered millions of mankind saved, made holy and happy for all eternity; God the revered and loved Sovereign of only a small province of His vast empire, all the rest in endless rebellion against His divine authority—a rebellion which he can never subdue but only hold in partial check at best; untold multitudes of His rational, immortal creation writhing in hopeless agony and despair world without end; the divinely beneficent purpose of the Infinite Father in respect to all these thwarted forevermore! Compare this with my own tabulated doctrine that there is a perfect divine retribution for all moral agents; that all punishment is remedial and calculated to work out the reformation of the subject; that good shall finally triumph over evil, holiness and happiness at length prevail throughout the immensity of being, and God be all in all!

But my chief objection to the creed under examination is that, as already stated, it makes belief in its assumptions the absolute and unqualified condition of salvation. "Which faith," definitely expressed in the document, "except every one do

keep entire and inviolate, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." If this be so, is it not strange, is it not astonishing that Jesus and the early promulgators of his Gospel knew nothing about it, or knowing, did not declare it with all definiteness and plainness of speech so that no one could possibly mistake concerning it? How solemnly authoritative would it have seemed in the Sermon on the Mount, among the sayings of the last interview of Jesus with his disciples before his betrayal, in Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost, or Paul's address on Mars' Hill, or anywhere, indeed, in the early proclamations of the Gospel Message! Nay, how incongruous, I might say, with the spirit and burden of that message whensoever or by whomsoever delivered! The apology for this reticence—this omission or neglect offered by Athanasius himself, to the effect that the Jews were so fixed in the idea that the Messiah of their prophets was to be a man like themselves that great care had to be used in divulging the doctrine of the divinity (deity) of Christ—this apology is hardly admissable in view of the fact that Christianity itself was a protest against the traditional Judaism of that age and that any preaching of it was an offence to the feelings, prejudices, and long-cherished opinions of the followers of Moses; which, however, did not put to silence Peter, Paul, and the rest, much less Jesus, as champions and defenders of the truths and doctrines of the new religion that had come into the world for the world's redemption. The truth is, the postulates of the Athanasian Creed are no part

of the Gospel of Christ; are not in harmony with but opposed to its teachings;— they are foreign accretions devised by Greek metaphysicians, who, being nominally converted to Christianity and raised to high ecclesiastical positions, engrafted them upon the prevailing standards of faith, thus corrupting the church and turning it away from “the simplicity that is in Christ.”

One of the most mischievous and deplorable consequences of this corruption of the church — of exalting to a place of supreme importance the assumption that all who would be saved must hold some given form of faith, while all who doubt, question, or deny that faith “without doubt shall perish everlastingly,” has been to foster and promote religious pride, bigotry, injustice, persecution, a malignant and damnable exclusiveness on the part of those thus believing towards all dissentients and unbelievers. Such assumption contains the seeds of these and kindred anti-Christian vices, conceals the virus that poisons the very fountains of the divine life in the soul of man. Nay, more; it not infrequently vitiates men’s conception of God, causing them to deny His supreme universal Fatherhood, and not only to limit His saving grace and power, but ascribe to Him qualities and acts derogatory to His all-perfect character; making Him the enemy and not the friend of the wayward and sinful, and investing Him with the attributes of a malign despot toward the great majority of those whom He created in His own image and made heirs of immortality. It has caused its

devotees and expositors to confine all divine grace, discipline, probation, and opportunity of salvation for the unregenerate to the fleeting periods of the earth-life, and to remand all who die "out of Christ" to the unappeasable vengeance of God and to the flames of never-ending fire. But the most fatal defect of this creed is to be found in the fact that it contains no prescript to a virtuous and holy life, and lays upon its adherents no sacred obligation to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God"—to be Christlike in thought, in conduct, and in character. The things which the Master made paramount and supreme, it makes little or no account of, while the things which He never requires or even mentions, it exalts to a place of superlative and indispensable importance. To a rational understanding, to a judgment governed by moral considerations, to a soul animated by the spirit of Christ, this is its sufficient, all-prevailing condemnation. If my proposed standard of faith and practice be not incomparably superior to this one in the respects indicated, then are error, folly, and hate better and nobler than truth, wisdom, and love in the moral estimate, and in the divine order of the world.

DISCOURSE XIX.

THE ROMAN AND GREEK CHURCHES EXAMINED: THEIR CREEDS ANALYZED AND COMPARED.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” — *Col.* ii. 8, 18.

The two oldest religious bodies in Christendom, as well as the two largest in point of numbers, are those commonly designated by the names “The Roman Church” and “The Greek Church.” Each styles itself “The One, True, Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church,” and in various forms of expression claims supreme precedence over all others. Both hold sacred and fundamental the Nicene and Apostle’s Creeds, except that the Greek church protests against that interpretation of the former which makes the Holy Ghost proceed from the Son no less than from the Father, and not from the Father only, as it maintains. That church separated from the Roman in the eleventh century, chiefly on the ground that the alleged supremacy of the Pope was an unwarranted usurpation, though there were other but minor

points of doctrine or of ceremony involved; all in the direction of greater simplicity and closer conformity to the example of the primitive church. Its ministry differs from that of the Roman communion as oligarchy differs from monarchy, the ultimate authority being vested in several Patriarchs instead of one Papal sovereign; both alike, however, in exercising arrogated power and in making the laity at large fawning suppliants or abject slaves;—a form of ecclesiasticism as unlike that of Apostolic times as was that of the Levitical priesthood under the Mosaic dispensation. Both, too, were the natural fruits of that assumption of episcopal prerogative which, beginning in the second century, grew in strength and in audacity for more than a thousand years; giving birth to innumerable evils, mischiefs, and abominations throughout Christendom, and bringing incalculable reproach upon the name and religion of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

It is not convenient for me, nor is it necessary to my leading purpose, to examine in detail and critically the respective declarative confessions of these two great sects (for sects I must in strict justice call them) of the nominal church of Christ. Suffice it if I consider somewhat minutely that of the Roman (or Western, as it is often termed,) branch and note in proper time and place the more important points upon which the Greek (or Eastern) branch is at variance or in controversy therewith. I have already stated that both, with specified exceptions, hold to the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. The Western church accepts the Athana-

sian declaration of belief, as noted in a former discourse, but the Eastern disowns it, or, at least, is silent concerning it altogether.

The several formularies just mentioned were regarded as the authoritative standards of faith in the Roman Catholic body from the time of their adoption until the rise of the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. The agitation and unrest caused by that great movement in human history seemed to necessitate, in the minds of the Papal hierarchy and their advisers, a re-statement of the doctrine of the long-dominant ecclesiasticism of the Christian world, with the view of adapting it to the needs of the times, of foreclosing, if possible, all forms of heresy that might arise to threaten its prosperity and its peace, and of inducing the Protestants to return to the old faith. To effect that object the famous "Council of Trent" was convoked by orders from the Pope—a Council whose fortunes were singularly varied and phenomenal. It was first summoned to meet at Mantua in Italy in 1537, but the reigning monarch there objected and it was appointed at Vicenza. By reason of prevailing excitement which threatened violence, bloodshed, and open war, it did not convene till 1545, and then at Trent in Austria, when and where its deliberations began. After numerous adjournments and suspensions, occasioned by the troubled state of the times, the appearance of the plague, the occurrence of vacancies by death in the Pontifical chair at Rome, etc., its twenty-fifth and final session was held Dec. 4,

1563, at which date its decrees were signed and a few weeks after confirmed by the Pope, Pius IV, making them the recognized and authoritative doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, as they have continued to be substantially to the present day. Nothing of importance, that I am aware of, has been added to them since, excepting the dogma of "The Immaculate Conception," as it is called, and that of "The Infallibility of the Pope," which had been practically adopted many generations ago, it being, as before indicated, the leading cause of the withdrawal and independent attitude of the Greek church in the eleventh century. These later accretions are but the ornamental finishing touches given by Pius IX and his prelates to the medieval standard set up by the doctrinaires of Trent and formally enjoined upon all true Catholics from that day to the present time. That standard I present to my readers in full, under the name of the distinguished Pontiff whose signature imparted to it validity and sanctity in all departments of the most ancient sect in Christendom.

CREED OF PIUS IV.

"I most firmly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions and all other constitutions and observances of the same [holy Roman] Church. I also admit the sacred Scriptures according to the sense which the holy mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers. I profess also that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the

new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord and for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessary for every one; namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace; and of these, baptism, confirmation, and order cannot be reiterated without sacrilege. I do also receive and admit the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, received and approved in the solemn administration of all the above said sacraments. I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning sin and justification. I profess likewise that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a whole conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole wine into the blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation. I confess, also, that under either kind alone, whole and entire, Christ and a true sacrament is received. I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honored and invoked, that they offer prayer to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated. I most firmly assert that the images of Christ and of the Mother of God, ever Virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained, and that due honor and veneration are to be given to them. I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people. I acknowledge the holy catholic and apostolic Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St. Peter, prince of the apostles and vicar of Jesus Christ. I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general

councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent; and likewise I also condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever, condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church. This true catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now freely profess and truly hold, I, A. B. promise, vow, and swear most constantly to hold and profess the same whole and entire, with God's assistance, to the end of my life; and to procure, as far as lies in my power, that the same shall be held, taught, and preached by all who are under me, or are entrusted to my care, by virtue of my office. So help me God and these holy Gospels of God. Amen."

REMARKS.

Is it not incredible that a grave body of men, professing to reverence Christ and his Apostles and to derive their faith from the New Testament Scriptures, should embrace and declare under oath as absolutely true and obligatory such a creed and covenant as this? Yet no man can enter and maintain good standing in the Roman hierarchy without doing the same thing. In view of this fact one is prompted to ask for what cardinal objects the Romish Church exists, except to secure belief in astounding dogmas, perform burdensome ceremonies, maintain an autocratic priesthood, and induce the credulous and superstitious to hope for heaven in the world to come on account of such belief and formal observances in the world that now is. Moral and spiritual Christlikeness, in its ministry, in its laity, in its social relationships—the conversion of individual souls and the world from sin to holiness—the development of a divine order of human life—the building up of the kingdom of

God on the earth,—these things are not proposed, suggested, or seemingly dreamed of as the proper, paramount ends for which the church exists and to the accomplishment of which its energies and activities should be unwaveringly directed. And yet these are the ends and aims that are made of surpassing importance and portrayed in bold relief as the supreme objects of human pursuit and of Christ's mission on every page of the Gospel story. Is it any wonder that a church, forgetting or ignoring these great essentials of Christian truth and duty, turning itself away from the plain precepts and example of its professed Master and Lord, notwithstanding its outward success in many respects — notwithstanding its immense following, its stately ceremonial, its imposing cathedrals and ever-open sanctuaries, should have given rise to myriads of sceptics and infidels wherever it has held sway, and have been attended by an ignorant, degraded, dissolute populace? Is it any wonder that under such circumstances persecution and cruelty, violence and bloodshed should have characterized its career through the ages; that in partially civilized lands where it has had place and kept up its solemn rites, the great majority of offenders against the laws of God and man, of mischief-makers and criminals, should come from its ranks; or that its ecclesiastical capital was for generations one of the filthiest, most disorderly, worst-governed cities in Europe, whose better-minded inhabitants rejoiced to welcome a new regime when a convenient opportunity was presented to them? Is it any wonder

that with all that can justly be claimed in its favor,—with its orders of charity, its restraints upon certain proscribed forms of immorality and vice, its considerable roll of sincere, upright, God-fearing devotees and saints above reproach and blame, it should cling tenaciously to the past, obstruct the pathway of human progress, and yield only when obliged to, and then most reluctantly, to those ameliorating and redemptive forces, which, under God and through the consecrated efforts of high-minded, philanthropic, noble-souled men and women, are working for the uplifting of humanity, for the enlargement of the empire of truth, righteousness, and love among men, and for the coming of the kingdom of heaven to the earth?

But let us particularize. Let us examine some of the principal features of the confession which reflects the decisions of the Council of Trent, and which distinguishes the theological and moral attitude of the Romish Church in these later centuries of the Christian era. I can but epitomise and indicate by abbreviated extracts, the more significant affirmations of the document referred to and quoted on a preceding page, beginning with the first which reads as follows:—

1. “I most firmly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions,” etc. What are these apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, as they are termed? They consist of a large number of alleged facts, historical, doctrinal, ceremonial, sacerdotal, pastoral, relating to the fundamental principles, the organic structure, or the administrative polity of

the church, which are not mentioned in the New Testament records nor in any authentic annals of early Christian or Apostolic times, but which claim to have originated or taken place in those times; the knowledge of them having been transmitted orally and without break or perversion from Jesus and his immediate fellow-workers to their successors, and these to others coming after them, and so on from generation to generation and from age to age. But a careful inquiry into their origin, conducted according to the laws of historical evidence, proves beyond question that most of them are wholly untrustworthy, while the few that can be substantiated are of very little importance as related to Christian doctrine or the Christian life. Speaking in a general way they sprang up at a very confused and obscure period of human history, were at first exceedingly vague and uncertain, were embraced by the superstitious and credulous, and greatly magnified by unscrupulous ecclesiastics who cared little or nothing for their authenticity or validity only so be it they could be used to further their own ambitious designs and promote their own personal advantage. The more thoroughly they are tested the more worthless do they appear as supports or aids to pure and undefiled religion. I therefore cast them aside as undeserving of notice in any rational effort to re-mold the nominal Christian church and bring it into accord with the pattern shown us in the New Testament.

2. "I also admit the sacred Scriptures according to the sense in which the holy mother church

has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures," etc. This is an unwarrantable surrender of that right of private judgment in matters of religion which it is every person's inalienable prerogative and solemn duty to maintain and exercise — a right of which no church can dispossess a person without committing an act of gross tyranny and usurpation. The Scriptures themselves teach very clearly the course of thought and conduct to be pursued in this regard. They throw every one back upon his own personal responsibility, and counsel every one in the words of the Master to "search the Scriptures" for himself and to judge for himself what is right in this as in all other matters of duty and obligation. No church has any authority or is competent or ought to presume to give infallible interpretations of the divine word and impose such interpretations upon its devotees without the consent and hearty approval of the individual reason, judgment, and conscience. It may offer opinions, defend them, urge their acceptance, but must never by any authority or power at its command impose them arbitrarily upon its members, but leave them to act upon their own responsibility in accepting or rejecting them. The Roman church has never encouraged or even tolerated this freedom and independence of thought and judgment in the study of the sacred records, and so is deserving of the censure and reprobation of all high-minded, intelligent, liberty-loving souls. Moreover, its expositors, teachers, ministers, of

whatever grade, have not, during the ongoing centuries of its history, been sufficiently intelligent, disinterested, rational, Christlike, to justify any such confidence, any such self-surrender as the clause of the confession under notice implies. Its assumptions upon the subject in question are not only preposterous, but intolerable. Compare them with my affirmations upon the same subject as they appear on pages 112, 113, and judge candidly which are most worthy of acceptance and commendation.

3. "I profess also that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord and for the salvation of mankind," etc. Now I venture to assert that Jesus Christ instituted nothing of the kind. The word sacrament is not found in the New Testament nor any equivalent term in the sense alleged; that is, as an ordinance instituted "for the salvation of mankind." Even baptism and the eucharist, the most important and most widely observed of the rites specified, have no such saving significance or power as set forth. They are but symbols of what is of vital importance—the first of that effusion and reception of the Holy Spirit which cleanses the soul from impurity and sin; the second of that communion and fellowship of true disciples of Christ which answers the Master's prayer, "that they all may be one," and of that tender and affectionate remembrance of him which is calculated to reproduce in the hearts of men his predominating spirit of self-sacrificing love. Neither of these has the least value or efficacy

in the work of redemption unless attended by these characteristic results. Concerning the other sacraments, they rest upon no authority whatever, as such, and have no binding force only so far as they can be made conducive to the moral and spiritual elevation and improvement of those who observe them. The sacredness ascribed to them as purely fanciful and illusive, having no better basis or reason for being than the fertile imagination of ambitious prelates or the traditions spoken of in the last paragraph. True allegiance to the great Teacher and an enlightened understanding concur in rejecting the assumptions of the Council of Trent and its mouth-piece, Pius IV, in respect to them.

4. "I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning sin and justification." Just as much of this confession as is in harmony with the teachings and example of Christ or can commend itself as true, useful, or expedient, to the reason and moral judgment of intelligent, God-fearing men, is allowable and worthy of acceptance, and no more. No credence is to be given it because enjoined by the Council of Trent or any other ecclesiastical conclave or tribunal before or since it was held. What is irrational, false, mischievous, unchristian, in doctrine, in ceremony, in ritual, or in practice, can derive no authority, no sanction, no obligatoriness, from any human enactment or decree, either of church or state.

5. "I profess likewise that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there is * * * a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body and of the whole wine into the blood, [of the Lord Jesus Christ,] which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation." Such profession is without warrant in either Scripture or reason, the things professed being alike repugnant and an offence to both. The idea of the mass as a propitiatory offering to God is a purely human conception which found early expression in the Levitical sin-offering of the ancient Hebrews, from whom it came into the complex ceremonial of the Catholic scholiasts and creed-makers, where it is clothed with supernatural efficacy and invested with a sacred charm to millions of unreasoning, credulous communicants. So far as it is regarded as a religious service it is based upon the Pagan conception of Deity as a Being subject to like passions with men and influenced by like motives and considerations; a Being at enmity with mankind but yet ready to become their friend by the presentation on their part of costly gifts and offerings. But all this is in utter contravention and denial of the great central Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and of His infinite, never-failing love for all His human children, in all lands and times, which is a virtual denial of Christianity itself and of its great Head, even Christ. And this is a sufficient refutation and condemnation of the dogma in question.

Equally fanciful and groundless, and even more absurd, is the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation. A few texts of Scripture taken in their most literal sense, such as, "I am the bread of life," "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you," may be and are quoted in its support; but they are all so evidently metaphorical and symbolic of a great spiritual truth as not to mislead or confuse any well balanced, thoughtful mind. And the hypothesis or conjecture that bread and wine by the invocation or other intervention of priest, bishop, or pope, or by the power of God, is, or ever was, changed in the twinkling of an eye and without the least modification of form into veritable flesh and blood, and *that* the flesh and blood of a personage who lived and moved among men two thousand years ago is too grossly unphilosophical, fallacious, puerile, delusive, to deserve more than the briefest consideration. Every one must know that the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper or eucharist are precisely the same material substances after priestly consecration they were before—bread and wine still, and in no literal or intelligible sense flesh and blood. Who thinks otherwise is beyond the reach of argument. And as to the utterances of Jesus referred to, their author indicates their figurative signification when he says in the same talk with his disciples, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." So ends the discussion upon that point.

6. "I constantly hold that there is a purgatory and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful." If by this affirmation is meant that there is a place or state, in which imperfect, sensual, sin-smitten human beings are subjected to influences and agencies calculated to cleanse and purify them and fit them for higher and more Christlike experiences, and that such may be helped by the prayers, sympathies, and fraternal aspirations of the faithful, even though death has removed the needy and suffering ones from all mortal sight, I should not be disposed to object to that view, though I should not deem it wise to incorporate it specifically in a platform for a true Christian church. But I fancy that the purgatory of the papal theology has few characteristics like the one I have portrayed. That, if I understand it, pertains wholly to the world to come; is an intermediate state of existence between earth and heaven. It is for imperfect Catholic souls, or those of kindred faith, destined for heaven in the not far-distant future, yet not pure enough at present to enter its blessed abodes, and so must needs tarry awhile on the way in order to be purged of the evil that contaminates them by more or less disciplinary punishment between death and the resurrection; which punishment may be mitigated or shortened somewhat, and deliverance from it into Paradise be hastened, by the supplications, votive offerings, and benefactions to the church on the part of relatives, friends, and interceding priests, still dwelling in the habitations of earth and time.

Taking this view of the doctrine it is to be summarily rejected. And when used, as is often the case, to terrify the unfaithful and credulous, to gain proselytes, to foster ceremonial and pretended piety, or to swell the revenues of the church and nourish priestly pride and ambition, it is a delusion and a snare, a mischievous and reprehensible superstition, to be disowned and anathematized as an offence to God and to Christly men.

7. The adoration or semi-worship of saints, veneration for their relics, the homage paid to images of Christ and of the Virgin Mary as the "Mother of God," and all similar exercises and requirements having no basis in Scriptures, in moral verities, or in an enlightened conscience and understanding, must be considered as vagaries and species of idolatry, and denied a place in every Christian creed and ritual. All just honor should be paid to saintly men and women, martyrs for truth's sake and prophets of God of every age, race, or nation, and a certain measure of interest in and love for painting and statuary representing the personality of the truly great and good, as well as the scenes in which they were conspicuous and the laudable achievements they have won in the service of God and humanity, should be cherished and commended. But everything akin to adoration or worship in the highest sense belongs to God and to Him alone,—the almighty, all-wise, all-perfect Father.

8. The doctrine of indulgences as held and practiced in the Roman Church is wholly indefensible and pernicious. For any dignity of ecclesi-

astical or civil rank in life, however high in authority and power to presume to grant to any subordinate the privilege of committing sin, venial or otherwise, with the promise of shielding him from the retributive consequences thereof, or for one to avail himself of such privilege by the payment of money or for any earthly consideration, is a capital offence against the moral order of the world, an insult to every commandment of Scripture, and an outrage upon the common conscience of mankind. The idea needs no exposure of its essential wickedness and no attempt to prove its ruinous influence upon human character and the durable welfare of the world.

9. Acknowledgment of the Roman Church as the mother and mistress of all the churches, and the Pope as the successor of St. Peter has no virtue in it and forms no part of the duty enjoined by that Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto human salvation. If Peter could be considered "the prince of the apostles and vicar of Jesus Christ," it was only in a rhetorical and figurative sense, and not as having been clothed with absolute authority and power to govern the church according to the dictates of his own arbitrary will, which authority and power he could transmit to a line of successors continuing unto the end of time. And the promise or vow to obey any one who should presume to appear in that line at any period in human history is of the same essential nature as that of sworn allegiance to any claimant for homage and loyalty that may spring to the front

in the arena of human affairs, All such devotion, self-surrender, and allegiance, I disallow, repudiate, and condemn, as derogatory to manliness of character, prejudicial to true discipleship of Christ, and as dishonorable towards Him to whom alone unreserved obedience is evermore due.

10. The remaining clauses of the creed under notice may be grouped together and made to share a common consideration and verdict. They are indiscriminate and sweeping in their character and have little in them to commend them to the better judgment and higher moral sense of mankind. They virtually enjoin, as they verbally express and avow, the most unquestioning, not to say the most servile and abject, submission to the dictates and decrees of the Roman Hierarchy as formulated and proclaimed by the Council of Trent, conceding no right of private judgment and recognizing no claims of the individual conscience to answer for itself at the bar of infinite justice in all matters of faith, of duty, and of righteousness. And this in arrogant contempt of that liberty wherewith Christ maketh free and in utter repudiation of the repeated charge of the Master to those who were to carry his message as ambassadors to the waiting multitudes of Judea and to Gentile nations dwelling beyond on its way to the conquest of the world. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them and they that are great exercise authority upon them: But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and

whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." — *Matt.* xx. 25-28. "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren." — *Matt.* xxiii. 8. "Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" — *Luke* xii. 57.

How far the Greek Church, whose secession from the Roman autocracy was consummated in the eleventh century, is absolved from censure or condemnation in regard to the objectionable features of the confession just examined can be stated in a brief paragraph. It denies the authority of the Pope and all the claims set up for the superiority of the Papal See, although it assumes scarcely less for its own Patriarchate, but without pretension of its infallibility. It repudiates all indulgences for sin and knows of no such place or state as the Roman purgatory. It excludes confirmation, extreme unction, and matrimony from its list of sacraments, and ascribes no sacrificial significance to the eucharist, giving no credence to the dogma of transubstantiation. It maintains that the Holy Ghost proceeds alone from the Father, being an emanation or manifestation of the Infinite Divine Spirit. It venerates the Virgin Mary and canonized saints in subordinate degree, but objects to image worship, and even to the use of images in relief or embossed work, though allowing paintings, and engravings in copper and silver. It approves the marriage of priests, provided they enter that relation before

receiving holy orders. In many other but unimportant respects it differs from its great contemporary. Yet for the most part the two agree substantially in doctrine, in organization, and in church administration, as they do in matters of duty and practical righteousness. In regard to essential truth and the exemplification of the principles of holy living, I can but feel that both alike have departed widely from the teachings and requirements of pure Primitive Christianity.

Yet it would undoubtedly be very unjust to deny that both of them have numbered and still number among their adherents many exemplary, praiseworthy disciples of Christ, animated by his spirit, reproducing his life, doing his work in the world. Such are what they are, not because of their ecclesiastical relations and surroundings, or of their doctrinal beliefs, but often in spite of them and to their condemnation. Yet they are in the same denominational ship with an overwhelming mass of less worthy associates, under the management of partizan, ambitious, and arrogant prelates,—the victims or slaves of a system, to which they nominally belong but which they virtually are not of. They are stars of hope in a darkened sky, the seed-grain of blessed harvests yet to come. And by such in God's good time, casting off their old ecclesiasticism and rising into a new life, shall the church of the better dispensation be built. So may it be.

DISCOURSE XX.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND RELATED COMMUNIONS.

THE THIRY-NINE ARTICLES.

“Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth.” — *Titus* i. 13, 14.

The Church of England, though somewhat younger than the Evangelical Lutheran Church established in Germany by the distinguished theologue whose names it bears, may yet be deemed first in importance among the religious bodies that sprang up in the sixteenth century as the result or first-fruits of that great movement known as the Protestant Reformation. It derives its name from the fact that it separated from the Roman hierarchy and assumed an independent position in the religious world with the sanction and by the authority of the English government, of which Henry VIII was then head, and has received the support of that government as a state church from that day to the present time. Its related communions are those branches existing in the colonial possessions of the kingdom with which it holds some definite ecclesiastical relations, and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, which, though not

organically connected with it, is yet substantially like it in theory, in form of administration, and in practical life. This American branch of the English Church was severed from the parent stock and became independent by reason of the separation of the colonies on this side the Atlantic from the mother country, which necessitated a change of so much in its ritual as related to its former connection with the British state. A few other alterations in its methods of operation have been made from time to time, but none that have affected materially its essential character or standing as an ecclesiastical body. The English church adheres to the Nicene, Apostles', and Athanasian Creeds, but the American rejects the last of these. The doctrinal standards of the former are found in the Book of Homilies, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Prayer Book; those of the latter being the same, with the modifications just referred to, and to them we must go, especially to the Thirty-nine Articles, for themes of discussion in the present Discourse. With the time and space at my command I cannot enter into all the details of those Articles, but, passing silently by the less important particulars, address myself to those of primary significance, condensing what I have to say upon them to the narrowest possible limits.

It will prepare the way for the more intelligible consideration of the general subject of this Discourse and be doing more perfect justice to all persons and parties concerned, if I indulge in a few additional explanatory observations; more particularly as regards

the bearing which the discussion may have in respect to the Church of England, its official functionaries, and the great multitude of its communicants and votaries. That Church is in many ways anomalous and paradoxical; exceedingly complex, diversified, heterogeneous, mixed, and even self-contradictory, in its membership and actual beliefs. It sustains close relations to the civil authorities. Its real head is the reigning monarch, who may be a sincere, devout follower of the Master, or an agnostic, a man of the world, a debauchee, or a profligate. But whatever his merits or demerits be, his character and life, honorable or dishonorable, he must be *ex-officio* a good churchman. The House of Lords has a considerable clerical representation, holding seats by virtue of their ecclesiastical position. Both clergy and laity of this Church are divided into at least three schools of religious thought or opinion—three sects in one sect—three parties in one fellowship, to wit: the High Churchmen, almost Roman Catholic in their views; Low Churchmen, virtually Presbyterian or Methodist; and Broad Churchmen, who are Rationalistic in various degrees. To these might probably be added a *No Church* contingent, who care nothing for religion in any sense; but who keep up its forms from motives of expediency or personal advantage, or possibly from long-continued habit, the momentum of which has not yet been overcome. Its statement of faith is a strange compound of Calvinism and Arminianism which no metaphysical genius or necromancer has been able to harmonize

and unite. And its system of ecclesiastical administration is an inexplicable network of spiritual and temporal methods, appliances, and maneuverings. Many of these censurable features of the English Church no doubt characterize its American counterpart, and so far expose it to the same criticism — possibly to the same condemnation. But leaving these generalizations we will proceed to a more specific examination of the leading doctrinal declarations of the system under notice, embodied in the famous

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

“1. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“2. The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

“3. As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that He went down into hell.

“4. Christ did truly rise again from death and took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until He return to judge all men at the last day.

"5. The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

REMARKS.

I have quoted these articles in full as pertaining to one common subject—the Trinity—not with a view of repeating the criticisms I have already made, but to show, briefly, how much scholastic error and stultifying contradiction the ecclesiastical artisans of the English Church could combine with a modicum of grand Scriptural doctrine; all of which is solemnly vouched for and put forth as absolute divine truth by the present generation of British and American Episcopalians, whatever may be their mental reservations.

The first period of the first Article expresses a sublime conception of the Infinite Author and Preserver of all things, except that possibly the terms "parts" and "passions" may be of doubtful import. But alas for what follows! This one God who is "without parts" by some magic or divination is divided into co-equal parts, called persons, "of one substance, power, and eternity." Moreover, His second part, called "the Son," "begotten from everlasting," "the very and eternal God," contracted His infinity to an atom in the womb of the blessed Virgin, where He took to Himself another part, a man's nature, becoming thereby both God and man, "never to be divided." In that complex capacity He suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried; He rose again; and, taking once more "His body," "flesh, blood, and all things pertain-

ing to His human nature," ascended therewith to heaven, where He, "without body, parts, or passions," sitteth and will sit with His human body, flesh, blood, etc., till He return to judge all men at the last day. Can any combination of words, any verbal jugglery, be more unphilosophical, irrational, puerile, absurd, than that?

Yet still more unreasonable and astonishing, if possible, this living, eternal God "truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us," etc. Yet this Father was of the same "substance, majesty, and glory" as was the Son and the Holy Ghost. But neither of these two needed to be reconciled. Why, then, should the Father? How could there be such need in His case when there was no need in the case of the others, if they were all one and the same as repeatedly declared? Nevertheless, the second of these persons in the triune Godhead voluntarily assumed the tremendous sacrificial burden of appeasing the first of them, when, if language has any meaning, they were both alike, "very and eternal God," "of one substance, power, and eternity."

And then, again, the third person proceeded from the other two, although he was just as old, original, powerful, and glorious as either of the others. How can one being proceed or derive existence from other beings when all are of the same age and co-equal in all respects, neither having precedence of, or superiority over, the others? Moreover, if there were any proceeding in the case before us, the second person of the Trinity—the

God-man—who as such did not exist till his incarnation—till conceived of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost, may be much more truly said to have proceeded from the Holy Ghost than the Holy Ghost from Him,—the Holy Ghost being in fact, according to the laws of procreation, his father, as Mary was his mother. And this accords fully with the letter of the Scriptures found in *Matt.* i. 18, and *Luke* i. 35.

But why dwell upon these incredible, amazing vagaries of a pur-blind, superstitious, self-inflated dogmatism? They have no pretended basis except in those apocryphal fictions which preface the two Gospels mentioned, and which, according to reliable ancient testimony, did not appear in the manuscript editions used by the early Hebrew Christians, but which were surreptitiously introduced before the middle of the second century, to the great confusion of commentators and to the deplorable misguidance of the church and the fearful perversion of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” It is a fact that militates strongly against the authenticity of those preliminary passages, even if it does not demonstrate their spuriousness, that none of the extraordinary phenomena narrated in them are mentioned at all in any contemporaneous writings, or so much as referred to in any other portion of the same Gospels or elsewhere in the New Testament record; an omission most unaccountable and even blameworthy if the hypotheses founded upon them formed any part of the “good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people,” or were of such vital importance in the work of human redemption as has

been for fifteen centuries and still is ascribed to them by the great majority of priests and people in the nominal Christian church, and as is even now believed by millions of sincere, intelligent followers of the man of Nazareth. But the day is surely coming when such theories will be regarded by all conscientious, reasonable men and women as most people now regard the exploded illusions of fetish worshipers in most ancient times or among most ignorant and degraded peoples. All honor to those, who, seeing their intrinsic falsity and harmfulness will expose their real character and cry aloud against them, and who, like Servetus the anti-trinitarian Spanish physician, would be burned at the stake sooner than pretend to believe such unwarranted, chimerical, unchristian mysticisms and superstitions. "Let the dead bury their dead," though it take a thousand years.

Article Six of the series under examination, "Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures," and Seven, "Of the Old Testament," need considerable pruning and qualification, but are not of sufficient importance to justify specific criticism in this connection. Especially as my views upon the subjects involved are presented with sufficient fullness in a previous discourse. And the subject-matter found in Article Eight, "Of the Creeds," received all needful consideration in my last one (No. XIX).

9. "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far

gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature, inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh * * * is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

As I have not heretofore considered at length the long-held doctrine of human depravity, I give the above article entire, as to its essential teaching, in order that I may make it the basis of a somewhat thorough examination of the subject. It is a rather awkward and ambiguous statement of the doctrine, which is, in brief, that the whole human race lapsed in Adam into a state of either total or nearly total sinfulness, guilt, corruption, and rebellion against God; in other words, the doctrine of the "Fall of Man." Expressed in full it represents that Adam and Eve, the reputed first parents of all mankind, were created not merely innocent, like infants, unconscious of the moral law, but absolutely holy and Godlike; and so constituted as to be immortal unless they should commit sin. Adam was made the federal head of all his posterity and placed on probation, not for himself alone but for all his descendants. The artful adversary, Satan, so runs the theologic tale, tempted Eve and through her Adam. Both sinned, thereby coming into a state of gross depravity, and were consequently sentenced to death—death temporal and death

spiritual; or, as sometimes formulated, "to all the miseries of this life, death itself, and the pains of hell forever." Their depravity, thus acquired, with its attendant guilt and resultant sentence of condemnation, they transmitted to all deriving existence from them. Whence it follows that all men, of every age and clime to the end of time, are born under the curse of sin derived from their original progenitors, and hence called original sin, are inclined by hereditary propensity to all manner of iniquity, and doomed to never-ending misery in the world to come.

Such in comprehensible terms is the teaching of scholastic theology in the Episcopal and all so-called Evangelical Churches concerning the Fall of Man—the state into which the entire race was brought by Adam's transgression, the condemnation resting upon all human beings, and the doom to which all are liable. I count this whole theory from beginning to end a sheer fiction of metaphysical dogmatists and ecclesiastical system-builders, and a most dismal and lugubrious one in all its parts. Nothing like it appears ever to have been hinted by Christ, so far as we have any record of him, his teachings, or his labors, and nothing can be found in all the New Testament Scriptures from which a plausible inference can be drawn in support of it, excepting a few expressions of the Apostle Paul, and these must be interpreted in their most literal and arbitrary sense to serve such an end rather than in that allegorical, typical sense designed by their author to teach some great truth, principle, or law

relating to that "life of the Spirit in Christ Jesus which makes men free from the law of sin and death."

Now any careful, candid, intelligent student of the 5th Chapter of Romans and the 15th Chapter of First Corinthians, where the passages often flippantly quoted in support of the hypothesis in question are found—any such student, unbiassed by sectarian narrowness and predilections, and free from the trammels of traditionary interpretations and the usage of many generations, must see, without a shadow of a doubt, that the purpose and aim of the writer, who, above all his contemporaries, stood first and foremost for a rational, practical, spiritual religion as opposed to all ecclesiastical assumption, speculative mysticisms, old-time philosophy, and outgrown theology, were essentially and primarily what I have indicated, and not what the creed-makers in the article before us and elsewhere have suborned them to be. There is no intimation in the chapters specified, or in any chapter of his many epistles, that Paul believed or thought for a moment that Adam was absolutely holy and perfect to begin with; or that he was originally immortal in any other sense or manner than all men now are; or that his nature was radically changed from good to bad by his transgression; or that he was less capable of righteous living after than before he ate the forbidden fruit; or that his offspring were to be deemed guilty by reason of his act and punished therefor; or that they were totally vitiated, became "averse to all

good and prone to all evil" for the same reason; or that in consequence of what he did when overcome by temptation they would be less inclined or less able to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly," or more liable to go into the paths of disobedience than they otherwise would have been, or than he was in his first estate. The great Apostle taught none of these things, not even by implication. They have all been surmised, invented, put into definite propositions, and ascribed to him by those who knew little or nothing of the leading thought which ran through the passages alluded to, or of the great moral and spiritual ideas or truths that they were designed to embody and make available to the need of those to whom he was writing, and of all in any age or time to whom they should come as testimonies of the wisdom, love, and grace of God, the heavenly Father of all mankind.

What the thought of the Apostle was, what the proper meaning of those portions of his letters that have been so egregiously misinterpreted and falsified, is, to my mind, perfectly obvious and reasonable, when considered from his point of view and in the light of his personal experience. He undoubtedly accepted, as in some sense true, the Mosaic account of the genesis of the human race. To him Adam was the first human being that ever appeared on the earth and the paternal progenitor of all mankind. Through or by him they all came into the world, possessing naturally the same original constitution, the same appetites, pro-

pensities, passions, the same liability to temptation and sin, the same capacity for virtue and holiness of life, the same moral obligations and responsibilities that characterized him. He, in his ignorance and weakness, being tempted, committed sin, and according to the laws of the divine order, incurred just condemnation and the righteous penalty for wrong-doing, which in Scripture language is denominated "death." His descendants have done likewise, and have shared with him the condemnation and penalty. By him as a common ancestor they derived existence, were endowed with a common fallible nature, and made subject to good and evil by reason of the faculties and possibilities which came originally through intervening generations from him. In this sense and only in this sense were they made sinners by him, or, as it is sometimes phrased, "fell in Adam."

Now in contrast with this idea of Adam as the *natural* head of the human race, through or by whom, in the manner set forth, his posterity fell into sin and were brought into condemnation, is the idea of Christ as their *spiritual* head, the second or regenerate Adam by the grace and free gift of God. Such as he was and is all men may become by the renewing power of the self-same Spirit which dwelt in him; that is *Christlike*. By what he was and did,—by his truth, his wisdom, his love, his whole mediatorial, helpful, saving work, they are born from above, are rendered morally and spiritually new creatures in him, as in their unregenerate, carnal estate they were sinners

in Adam. This is the whole of it; and it is deplorable that speculative theologians out of their misconceptions and imaginations should have manufactured such a horrible doctrine as the "Fall of Man" into total depravity, and that the church should have been handicapped and cursed with it for more than a thousand years. For the primitive Christian view of this whole matter I refer my readers to Article II of my proposed platform, page III of this volume, also to Discourses XVIII-XX, Vol. I.

"10. The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing [preceding] us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

The combined mystification, error, and deception of this Article can be exposed and cleared away by a few plain questions. Does God ever require good will and good works of mankind which He has not in some way given them the ability to render and perform? Not unless He is a tyrant more unscrupulous and merciless than Pharaoh of old or Haynau of modern times. Was Adam before the "Fall" able by his own natural strength and good works, without divine help, to do what was pleasant and acceptable to God? Or, can any human being do anything without somewhat of God's strength and grace to help him? Can he sow or reap temporal fruit or grain? Can he even

retain the very breath of his earthly life? Of course not. Then why set up mysterious distinctions about what man can or cannot do without God's helping grace, and his working with us? And suppose a Jew, a Pagan, an Atheist, does justly and loves mercy, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, ministers to the needy and suffering, as set forth in *Matt.* xxv. 35-40, are not these works as good and as pleasing and acceptable to God as if done by a Christian? My creed says, yes; but this Article says, no. Let the candid reader judge between the two. The truth is, that this dogma of man's moral inability as a consequence of Adam's sin is pure fiction, whereby the credulous are deluded and the easy-going wrong-doer has his conscience lulled to undisturbed repose. Why should one try to do what he has no power to do?

"II. We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and full of comfort."

Here again theological subtlety and moral purblindness override common sense and common justice, as well as Gospel truth. There is as little Scripture as reason in the notion that Christ's merits are or can be credited to us on any ground whatever. His merits were and are his own. They are not ours because we believe in him. God cannot regard us as righteous unless we are so, in spirit and in truth. To do this would falsify the

facts in the case, would subvert the moral order of the world. "He that doeth righteousness," not he that hath faith in another's righteousness, "is righteous, even as he (Christ) is righteous." The faith that justifies us is a faith that works by love, purifying the heart, regenerating the character, transforming the life. The faith in Christ that saves us is a faith that makes us Christlike. It is personal virtue, worth, holiness, that God requires of each and every one, not that which is transferred from another. Indeed, virtue, worth, holiness, is not transferable any further than it inspires, quickens, generates the same qualities. Every injunction of the Master, every perceptive duty urged by Him, contemplates personal obligation and personal obedience. Such too is the lesson of the parable of the Prodigal Son. The justifying faith in this case was that faith in the father's love and yearning desire for his boy's return, that brought him to repentance, that drew him to his childhood's home, that insured him a welcome there, that gave him peace. This is the true doctrine of justification by faith, the only doctrine that finds warrant in reason or Scripture. Any other is not only not wholesome but mischievous, and can furnish no comfort to souls animated by the spirit and life of Christ.

Further discussion of the XXXIX Articles is reserved for my next Discourse.

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, ETC.—Continued.

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

“Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth.”—*Titus* i. 13, 14.

As the present Discourse is to be devoted to the further discussion of the subject under consideration in the last one, I place at its head the same text that was there employed; it being equally applicable to what I have to say in both cases. The more important and especially distinguishing features of the Protestant Episcopal Church Creed appear in the Articles already examined and commented upon at considerable length. The remaining ones, requiring less extended notice, will be more readily and summarily treated and adjudged. The discussion continues in regular order from the point of suspension.

Articles 12 and 13 declare “that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification,” “are pleasing and acceptable to God *in Christ*,” that is, not inherently and for their own sake but for Christ’s sake; and that such good works done before justification, and hence without the inspiration of Christ’s spirit, “are not pleasant to

God," "but have the nature of sin." From such declarations and the distinctions and limitations involved in them I can but re-affirm and urge anew the utter and most emphatic dissent expressed in reference to the three preceding Articles. The idea that good works, honestly and conscientiously performed, right actions and virtuous deeds, can be otherwise than praiseworthy and acceptable to God, for their own inherent worth and not by reason of any mystical relation to Christ, is profoundly repugnant and offensive to my own best judgment, as I have no doubt it is to the fundamental principles of sound morality and to the most unquestionable teachings of Jesus, his Evangelists, and early Apostles. And so I dismiss at once the Articles which affirm or imply otherwise.

The 14th Article is a truthful, well-deserved protest against the doctrine of "Works of Supererogation," so persistently taught and urged by the Roman Catholic Church since the Twelfth Century, when it was first promulgated; the doctrine "that there actually existed an immense treasure of merit, composed of pious deeds and virtuous actions which the saints had performed beyond what was necessary for their own salvation, and which were applicable for the benefit of others; that the guardian and dispenser of this precious treasure was the Roman pontiff, who was empowered to assign to such as he thought proper a portion of this inexhaustible source of merit suited to their respective guilt and sufficient to deliver them from the punishment due to their crimes."

So mighty and deplorable is the power of superstition over the minds and hearts of men that this doctrine, most absurd in its nature and pernicious in its effects, has held sway in the church which originated it for more than six hundred years, and is still maintained as one of the effective means of promoting its own narrow, sectarian ends and aims. This in itself is an all-sufficient reason for its condemnation, and the English church may be justly honored for lifting its voice of dissent and censure against it. Credit to whom credit is due.

The 15th Article affirms the sinlessness of Christ while declaring the peccability of all other beings wearing the human form, "although baptized and born again in Christ." There is too little that is objectionable in this to require special consideration. In accepting it, however, as a general statement I should retain the right of giving it my own interpretation and application. The 16th Article concerning "sin after baptism" may be passed by with the same comment, though I deem the subject too unimportant to appear in a standard of faith. Moreover, as it stands, it is cumbered with a mass of theological verbiage which is offensive both to my taste and judgment.

The 17th Article treats of "Predestination and Election," and demands more elaborate and careful examination. That it may be the more intelligently discussed I give the remarkable manifesto in full.

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid,) He hath constantly decreed, by His counsel, secret to us, to

deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

"As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of secret, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

"Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture; and, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God."

This is a long, tedious, circumvolved article of distinctly Calvinistic character, embodying a doctrine so fundamental, so central to a long prevailing theory of God and the universe of souls, and so obnoxious withal to reason, ethics, and Scripture, that it requires more than a passing notice—requires extended and critical examination. Let us

look at it with a clear vision and in all candor under several important heads :—

1. Predestination, we are told, is “the everlasting purpose of God,” formed “before the foundations of the earth were laid,” “to deliver from curse and damnation” such as He had chosen out of mankind unto everlasting salvation and never-failing felicity. From which it logically follows that when Adam was created, God foresaw, and, as the Infinite Designer of all events and destinies, foredoomed the so-called fall of the new-born being, and, through him, of all his posterity, into that state of curse and damnation from which He at the same time decreed the deliverance of a chosen few, to be made “the Sons of God by adoption,” and “attain everlasting felicity.” And foreseeing and foredooming all men to the condition set forth, He, in decreeing the salvation of an elected few in Christ, virtually decreed the continued curse and damnation of all the untold millions of the non-elect, and their consignment to the pains and agonies of hell forever. The article under notice does not state this horrible doctrine in so many words but it implies and involves it all the same. To elect and ordain the few to never-ending life and blessedness, passing by the many and leaving them to their fate, is really and indubitably to elect and ordain them to never-ending death and misery.

2. This doctrine fixes, beyond all question or peradventure, beyond all possibility of increase or diminution in either direction, the number of the saved and lost to all eternity. Nothing in the nature

of things can change the absolute decrees of the all-perfect God. What He determines, stands fast and sure forevermore. Those doomed to be lost can never be redeemed; those elected to be saved can by no possibility be lost. What a dissuasive is this doctrine to all moral effort! What an argument for the futility of all endeavor to save men from sin and its fearful consequences in time and in eternity! This feature of predestination ought to secure its swift and irreversible condemnation and expurgation from all creeds claiming to be framed in the name of Christ and for the promotion of his Gospel.

3. The consideration of this doctrine of predestination is "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to all godly persons," the article in review declares. Which, being rationally interpreted, means that it is perfectly delightful to the elect to meditate upon their own happy destiny, and upon the wretchedness and woe of the non-elect through ages unnumbered yet to be. Could utter, heartless, selfishness—could diabolic pleasure in others' misery be (unconsciously perhaps) more emphatically eulogized and divinized than by such a declaration? Are those capable of such a comfort and delight in any proper sense "godly" persons? Godly they may be after the manner of Moloch, god of war, who rejoiced in the pain and misery engendered by bloodshed and slaughter, but not after the spirit of Him whose most befitting name is Love, "who will have all men to be saved, who according to the teaching of the ancient prophet taketh no pleasure

in the death (degradation, pain, sorrow) of the wicked," and who, as Jesus represents Him, is ever pitiful and kind, commiserating the suffering and distress even of the unthankful and evil, and seeking to enhance the welfare and happiness of every creature He hath made.

4. "For curious and carnal persons," it is declared, "to have in mind this thought of God's predestination is a most dangerous thing, whereby the devil doth thrust them into desperation, or wretchlessness of unclean living, no less perilous than desperation." Exactly what this means it were difficult, even for an English church prelate or other polemic, to tell. Is it that the truth of God, the divine appointments and decrees in this respect, are not to be proclaimed to the non-elect lest they become more carnal, depraved, desperate, wretchless of unclean living than they now are? But was not that, according to the doctrine, exactly what they were created for — what they were foredoomed to, "from before the foundations of the world were laid," — an ever-continuing, ever-deepening possession and expression of qualities so obnoxious and deplorable? Ought they to be left ignorant of God's purposes concerning them and led to believe it possible for them ever to be saved when it is not? Is it out of divine order that such persons should in this present state of being be made to realize what they were created for, and so fulfill, as far as possible, even here the infinite design concerning them? I ask these questions in order to show the irrationality, the absurdity of the doctrine in question upon

the point under notice, to say nothing of its impugment of the character of God and of His relation to the children of men as Father, which, however, will be made presently to appear.

5. The last paragraph of the Article asserts very reasonably the duty of receiving God's promises in such wise as they are set forth in the Scriptures, and of doing His holy will as therein declared and made known to us. But in the performance of that duty I am sure, beyond all manner of doubt, that we shall repudiate and cast away as unworthy of belief or acceptance the delusive, demoralizing, impious doctrine of "Predestination and Election," as formulated in the first two paragraphs of the same Article. For those Scriptures, neither in their general teaching and spirit nor in any express declaration, properly interpreted, furnish any substantial ground upon which to base a belief in that doctrine, but ample and impregnable ground for disowning and rejecting it forever. The Scriptures represent God as good, just, merciful to all men, as desiring and seeking the highest good of all, and as administering the government of the whole universe of souls with a parental wisdom and love that leaves none uncared for and unblessed in the richness and universality of His all-beneficent providence. They represent Christ as not only possessing the likeness of God, but as animated beyond measure by the Spirit of God, whereby he was rendered capable of speaking the truth of God, of reflecting His moral perfections upon all classes and conditions of men, without regard to character

or conduct—to their election or non-election, of inaugurating and carrying forward a work of uplifting and redemption which shall not cease until universal holiness and happiness were achieved—until all tribes and nations and peoples of every kind and name should be made voluntarily subject to him, and “God be all in all.” They represent mankind without exception as children of God, created in His image—as moral agents, the subjects of divine law and discipline, capable of right-doing as of wrong-doing, and accountable to God for their thought and conduct. All instructions, commands, precepts, injunctions, are addressed to them on that basis, and all duty has pertinency and force for the reason that those upon whom it lays its claims are morally able to hear its voice, to respond to its appeals, and to obey its requirements. Is all this mere seeming—a pretence, a deceit, a snare for souls? It manifestly is, if the doctrine of the 17th Article of the Episcopal Church Creed is true. For of what possible use is preaching, moral teaching, inculcating moral and spiritual truth, proclaiming God’s love and pardoning grace, if a certain number of the race were predestined from the beginning to eternal life and blessedness, while all others were as certainly predestined to eternal death and woe? Alas, for such spiritual guides as we are now contemplating, who, for heavenly bread, give us ecclesiastical dogmatism and sophistry, and who, by the traditions and speculations of men, make void the commandments of God.

6. And one thought more upon this subject before I dismiss it. Consider what dishonor this doctrine of Foreordination and Election casts upon the name and character of God. According to it, He has decreed that a few of the sentient, intelligent, responsible creatures of His forming hand shall share His favor and His blessedness forever and ever, be made partakers of His divine life and of His unfading glory world without end; while He has doomed the rest—the vast majority of men, or left them, if one like the phrase better, though the moral quality of the two is essentially the same, to perish everlastingly,—to wander forever away from him in sin and wretchedness, “keeping them in existence,” as has been said, “only to suffer misery.” Is not such a being—a being who could thus foredoom untold millions of human beings to hopeless agony and despair, or who, knowing beforehand their awful, their appalling destiny, could still give them conscious existence,—is not such a being worthy rather of execration than of adoring worship and praise? Is he not to be classed with those gods of heathen, savage tribes, who are said to delight in malevolence, barbarity, and revenge, rather than to be identified as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Father too, of all the sons and daughters of men? The doctrine under examination is not only unreasonable, immoral, unscriptural; it is profane, irreverent, blasphemous.

The 18th of the Thirty-nine Articles declares that all persons are accursed who presume to say that a man is saved by the law or profession that he

makes, or who shapes his life by that law or profession, or by the light of nature. For it adds, "Holy Scriptures doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved." This Article is perfectly consistent with the preceding one, but has little or no significance or force with those persons who reject that. There is undoubtedly some sense in which Peter's declaration, as reported in the book of Acts, is true, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but it can be in no such narrow, dogmatic, exclusive sense as the reference to it implies. To prove this it is only necessary to quote another declaration of Peter in the same book; "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; For in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."

Of the article as a whole there are several things of an objectionable nature that may be said. 1. The New Testament in both its letter and its spirit admonishes us against cursing or holding as accursed any of our fellow-beings and especially on account of a difference of creed or opinion. Its word is "Bless and curse not." 2. It teaches us to respect honest, conscientious well-doing, according to one's own light, however defective that light may be or imperfect the duty performed. 3. It informs us that professing the name of Christ is of no worth without cherishing his spirit and obeying his precepts. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" was the Master's own rebuke

of those faulty in this respect. 4. While it makes perfect and absolute righteousness of thought and conduct essential to a perfect manhood after the pattern of Christ, it also approves and commends lesser degrees of excellence, and estimates all types and forms of virtue and piety according to their worth when tested by the circumstances attending them, the light received, and the motives of the one who possesses and illustrates them. The Article gives no heed to these paramount considerations, but, defiant of them all and of the whole genius of the Gospel, sets its seal of hopeless damnation upon the great overwhelming majority of the human race, whatever their virtues or nobler qualities of character, consigning them to eternal perdition because they do not in some prescribed, technical, ecclesiastical way believe or act in the name of Christ, under the assumption that this name has in it some magic charm, some miraculous power to deliver the soul from impending doom and secure to it eternal salvation. And all this, strange to say and to believe, when the fate of all men was fixed by divine decree or by election and non-election "from the beginning or ever the earth was," long before there was any Christ to believe in or any believers to take his name upon their lips or to their hearts, and irrespective of any regard for him whatsoever. Such inconsistency and folly not infrequently characterize the dicta of the creed-makers in every age of Christian history. From everything of the sort "may the good Lord deliver us."

The 19th and 20th Articles, treating of The Church and its Authority, are unobjectionable in their place, but their place is among the Rules and Regulations pertaining to the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, and not in a Statement of fundamental Christian faith, or in a Declaration of essential divine principles of truth and righteousness.

The 21st on the Authority of Councils, savors too much of sacerdotalism and priestly domination to satisfy an intelligent believer in the Congregational system of church government, or in Paul's exposition of the nature and use of that liberty of thought and action wherewith Christ maketh free — the liberty of the sons of God.

The 22d, condemnatory of the Romish dogma of Purgatory, Pardons, the Worship of images, etc., is true and proper enough, but not of sufficient account to be made a foundation-stone of a Christian church or a bond of fellowship in a Christian denomination.

The 23d and 24th contain some truth touching the office of the ministry, the proper preaching of the word, the conduct of ceremonial observances, etc., though too hierarchical in regard to the legitimate function of the minister, in making no allowance or provision for lay preaching, and in granting to the individual members of the church not formally consecrated by the laying on of hands no liberty of prophesying, of imparting instruction, or of exhortation in the regular service of the sanctuary.

The 25th Article concerning the Sacraments is not particularly objectionable, though ascribing to those which it claims were ordained and given special significance by Christ, a sacredness and an efficacy which they do not and cannot, in the nature of things and in the law of the soul's life, possess.

The 26th upon unworthy ministers and their ministrations, contains a modicum of truth clothed in unnecessary verbiage, but assigns too much sanctity to the office of the ministry and demands too little of the incumbent of that office.

The 27th and 28th treating respectively of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are open to the same observation made with reference to the 25th.

The 29th is a statement of a not very important fact and the 30th is a sensible rule for the administration of the Lord's Supper; both of them too unimportant to be given the position they occupy in this popular and widely received platform of religious faith.

Article 31 upon "the One Oblation of Christ," referring to his cruel death on Calvary, has in it too much of the idea of an angry and otherwise unappeasable God to command the approval of one who, while believing that the whole life and character as well as the death of that personage was a testimonial to his sublime spirit of self-sacrifice, has such complete, unswerving faith in the eternal goodness that he cannot entertain for a moment the thought that the Divine Being, Infinite Father of all men, needs to be placated or in any way propitiated in order to make Him willing and ready

to forgive and save even the most vile and unworthy of His human children. The doctrine of Vicarious Atonement, as understood and proclaimed by the self-styled evangelical churches, is an offense to my whole moral and religious nature, as well as to my judgment, as I have elsewhere set forth, and I have no occasion to discourse further upon the subject.

Articles 32, 33, 34, and 35 concerning "the marriage of Priests," "Excommunicate persons," "the Traditions of the Church" and "Homilies" may be dismissed as containing nothing worth contending against, and as allowable for those whose moral status can be raised and religious life promoted by such things.

The 36th Article relating to the "Consecration of Bishops and Ministers," appertains wholly to the English Hierarchy and is of no concern to those who hold that the highest and best church government, like that of the state, is "of the people for the people and by the people," regardless of bishops as that is of kings.

The 37th was originally framed for the purpose of adjusting the relations of church and state to each other under a system which united the two in the bonds of an unholy, unchristian wedlock. It has been greatly modified by our American Episcopalians to meet the changed political conditions existing here. I pass it by as of little consequence.

Article 38 protests against the "community of goods" as held and practiced by certain classes of

professing Christians, the same being it is claimed in contravention of the right, title, possession of property, but enjoins the duty of liberal almsgiving for the relief of the poor and needy ; yet it neither recognizes, recommends, nor suggests any Christian obligation to fraternalize all human interests, to limit the selfishness so often displayed in the accumulation and use of material gains, or to seek the re-organization of the social relations of men in order to bring them into accord with the principles of the Gospel and the great law of love to God and man.

The 39th and last Article of the series condemns what it calls "vain and rash swearing" but justifies legal oathtaking "when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity," although the plain, unqualified injunction of the Master was, "Swear not *at all*." In this as in many other respects noted there is a broad contrast between the declared fundamentals of the Church of England and related Communions and those I have formulated upon which to build the regenerate Church of Christ. Which of the two is most accordant with the teachings of the New Testament and the practice of the primitive church I leave my readers to judge for themselves.

In closing the examination of this long-drawn-out creed of the Protestant Episcopal Church, I have this general and, to my mind, most disparaging criticism to make, to wit : that it bears no definite, clear, uncompromising testimony to the vital and indispensable importance of righteous, holy living —

of Christlikeness of character and conduct, as the great end and object for which the church exists and to the development and perfecting of which in its adherents and in the world its chief energies should be directed and its multiform activities employed. How unlike is it in this respect to the teachings of the Master and his early Apostles! How little is there in it of the Sermon on the Mount, of the great law of love to God and man! The things that Jesus talked about most, that he most emphasized in precept, parable, injunction, command, and appeal, it omits altogether or refers to only by inference or implication. This is a fatal defect — one that carries with it inevitable condemnation — one that forever precludes it from acceptance as the standard or platform of the reconstructed church of Christ, in that new order of human life which shall some day be established on the earth, and under which

“All crimes shall cease and ancient frauds shall fail,
Returning justice lift aloft her scale;
Peace o’er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descend.”

DISCOURSE XXII.

BELIEFS OF THE GERMAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

“He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”—*Rom.* ii. 28, 29.

When Martin Luther, the celebrated German Reformer of the Sixteenth Century, and his devoted co-adjutors had roused multitudes of their fellow-countrymen from slumbering acquiescence in respect to the general polity and decretals of the Roman ecclesiasticism, and inspired them with enthusiastic and irreconcilable hostility to the Pope and his subordinate prelates, they very naturally soon became possessed with the idea of organizing a new movement, under which independent churches should be established in the various civil and political divisions of territory where they, by virtue of numbers and royal favor, exercised predominating authority and power. It was not the intention of Luther himself, at the outset of his crusade, to break wholly away from the Catholic hierarchy and set up an opposing establishment of any sort; but the stern logic of events ere long made such a result

inevitable. Nor, when he saw the issue approaching and became thoroughly convinced that the hoped-for reconciliation of the opposing forces was an utter impossibility, did he wish that the reconstructed ecclesiasticism or any organization under it should take his distinctive name. Nevertheless, his followers and those sympathizing with them soon came to be called Lutherans, first by Eck, one of the most bitter of the great Reformer's opponents, then by Papists generally, and finally by common consent of all parties.

But circumstances never favored the organic unity of the dissenting and seceding multitudes, nor the adoption of a uniform title by which all classes of them should be designated and known. They never withdrew their allegiance to the several civil governments under which they lived, and their polity and course of conduct were greatly modified by the ruling power in each and every given case. So that, in different provinces or principalities of Germany, and in different countries of northern Europe outside of German Supremacy, whatever churches were formed assumed certain provincial or national characteristics, grew up in a certain degree of independency of one another, and not infrequently took upon themselves different names. There seemed to be in the beginning a preference among all classes of reformers for the term Evangelical, which continues largely to this day. At the diet of Spire in 1529, where a formal protest was made against the usurpations of the Papal chair, they received the comprehensive name of Protestants,

which, at a later day, became employed to designate all those, whether disciples of Luther or not, who rejected the claims and authority of the See at Rome. In Poland and Austria the Reformed Church was known by the official title of "The Church of the Augsburg Confession," of which Confession more will be said presently. But the most widely accepted designation of the great majority of those who trace their ecclesiastical lineage back to the distinguished German leader, is "the Evangelical Lutheran Church," which may be regarded as including, in a general way, all those who claim to be the legitimate descendants and representatives of him whose name they bear.

The several churches or branches of the Protestant Church that were founded in the time of the Reformation or immediately afterward, and have continued unto the present day, all have a form of mongrel or modified episcopacy for an ecclesiastical polity or mode of government; but from the beginning those in Europe have, as already suggested, been so wedded to the state as to be not only subject to the patronage but to the authority of those occupying places of temporal power in the respective countries or sovereignties within whose jurisdiction they have had a place. These crowned heads of greater or less dignity and importance, emperors, kings, princes, dukes, or whatever the titles they have borne, have in most cases, claimed to be *ex-officio* bishops of high degree in the church, but have usually condescended to transfer their rights and prerogatives to Consis-

tories—bodies composed of the clergy and representatives of the laity, in which was vested all power of church government, both legislative and administrative.

Much diversity not to say divergence of opinion has prevailed, not only in the general Lutheran communion but in its various subordinate branches, and controversies in different departments of church life have rendered it impossible to establish any very detailed, coherent, and generally accepted church polity, numerous changes having been made from time to time in the past, and still likely to be made, in their recognized formularies. It is not my intention to treat these matters at any length but simply to allude to them as existing in this as in other departments of the nominal church of Christ. They concern the incidentals of prevailing ecclesiasticism; my business is with its fundamentals and to them I now pass.

So far as I am informed or can ascertain the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, and its offshoots or corresponding churches in other countries, departed far less from the theology and established doctrines of the Roman Catholics than any other of the several religious bodies or schools of thought, which, like that, may properly claim to derive their origin from the great upheaval of the Sixteenth Century known in history as *The Reformation*; the leading ones being those founded by Calvin, Zuingli, Arminius, Socinus, and Menno, in France, Switzerland, Holland, and Belgium. The German churches accepted as substantially true the

ancient Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostles' Creeds, the more essential features of which they reproduced under more satisfactory formularies in what is known in the history of the church as "The Augsburg Confession," the name of which was derived from the city in which it was originally adopted and promulgated. This confession was drawn up by Philip Melancthon, perhaps the most dispassionate, candid, clearheaded, learned, and conscientious of the co-laborers of the great Luther himself. It was first approved by a council of divines at Wittenburg, and in their behalf presented to a diet of nobles held at Augsburg, where it received the sanction of the imperial court, and in 1530 was proclaimed authoritative in the churches of the empire. For all the needful purposes of this examination, I transcribe to these pages a summary of this remarkable document as I find it in McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopædia of Religious Knowledge."

After re-affirming in the most solemn and emphatic manner the leading dogmas of the Nicene Creed, "the holy Trinity," "original and hereditary sin," "which bringeth eternal death to all who are not regenerated," "the incarnation of the Son," who is declared to be "very God and very man," — all of which assumptions I have sufficiently considered — the Confession proceeds to state under two heads other points of belief, consecutively epitomized as follows: —

"PART I. (1) Acknowledges four Ecumenical Councils: (2) Declares original sin to consist wholly

in concupiscence, [evil desires or indwelling sin :]
 (3) Contains the substance of the Apostles' Creed:
 (4) Declares that justification is the effect of faith,
 exclusive of good works: (5) Declares the Word of
 God and the Sacraments to be the means of con-
 veying the Holy Spirit, but never without faith:
 (6) That faith must produce good works purely in
 obedience to God and not in order to the meriting
 justification: (7) The true church consists of the
 godly only: (8) Allows the validity of the sacra-
 ments, though administered by the evil: (9) Declares
 the necessity of infant baptism: (10) Declares the
 real presence in the Eucharist, continued with the
 elements only during the period of receiving, and
 insists upon communion in both kinds: (11) Declares
 absolution to be necessary, but not so particular
 confession: (12) Against the Anabaptists: (13)
 Requires actual faith in all who receive the Sacra-
 ments: (14) Forbids to teach in the church, or to
 administer the sacraments, without being lawfully
 called: (15) Orders the observation of holy days
 and ceremonies of the church: (16) Of civil matters
 and marriage: (17) Of the resurrection, last judg-
 ment, heaven and hell: (18) Of free will: (19) That
 God is not the author of sin: (20) That good works
 are not altogether unprofitable: (21) Forbids the
 invocation of saints.

“PART II. (1) Enjoins communion in both kinds,
 and forbids the procession of the holy sacraments:
 (2) Condemns the law of celibacy of priests: (3)
 Condemns private masses, and enjoins that some
 of the congregation shall always communicate with

the priests: (4) Against the necessity of auricular confession: (5) Against tradition and human ceremonies: (6) Condemns monastic vows: (7) Discriminates between civil and religious power, and declares the power of the church to consist only in preaching and administering the sacraments."

1. This Confession was framed and adopted at a time when there was still some hope of reconciliation between the Reformers and Papists, on the ground of mutual concession upon points of controversy. Melancthon, who drew it up, was a much more moderate and prudent man than Luther, and in formulating the document raised as few issues as possible and passed silently over many points of Luther's offensive radicalism. Its conciliatory tone and careful phraseology secured great respect for it, especially from neutrals and moderates on both sides. But it failed to induce the ruling powers of the mother church to concede enough to gain the object sought. When it became manifest that the break between the two parties was too serious ever to be healed, the conflict was re-opened with increased vigor and virulence. The Reformers saw that the warfare was a momentous one and proceeded at once to organize their ecclesiasticism as well as their theology in their own way, and as in their judgment the crisis demanded. In attempting to do this they found differences of opinion to exist among themselves, which grew into dissensions that not only menaced but prevented that unity for which they had all fondly hoped. Nevertheless, the great majority agreed to stand by

each other and work together on the Augsburg platform, though, no doubt, with considerable tolerance towards each other and large freedom of private interpretation and judgment.

2. Most of what I deem unworthy of acceptance in this platform, including nearly all its leading affirmations, has, I repeat, been sufficiently criticized and condemned in preceding discourses. The doctrine of Consubstantiation, however, is a new one designed to supplant the Roman dogma of Transubstantiation, and hence demands a few moments notice, though it is scarcely less irrational and unscriptural, as Melancthon, Zuingli, and others of the reform movement came subsequently to think. The doctrine was that in the administration of the Eucharist the substance of Jesus Christ was, by miraculous interposition, actually present in the bread and wine during the observance of the rite and only then, instead of the transmutation of those elements into His veritable flesh and blood, as the Romanists held. But this has no foundation or warrant save in the imaginations or speculations of religious visionaries and controversialists. As a matter of fact, so far as the letter of Scripture is concerned, the Romanists have the advantage of their opponents. But both parties are in unquestionable error.

3. Concerning those points of doctrine which separated the Lutherans from Calvin and his adherents, and which gave rise to a bitter controversy resulting in a virtual break between the two parties involved, and their subsequent organic independence of each other, a few words of comment seem to be required.

To those immediately concerned the difference of opinion and belief was irreconcilable if not vital, and forever precluded the possibility of mutual harmony and co-operation in carrying forward the work of the Reformed Church. In my judgment, however, the difference was metaphysical and scholastic rather than essential, and of no such paramount importance as the contestants maintained. It was much the same in nature and practical moment as that which afterward divided the Arminians and Calvinists, or which, from that time to the present, has differentiated the extreme and moderate Calvinists from each other. In all these cases the bone of contention or cause of controversy and independent action was Calvin's favorite dogma of "Election and Reprobation" or of "Predestination," as it was then termed, which, as formulated by the Synod of Dort, is, "That God hath chosen a certain member of the fallen race of Adam in Christ, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal glory * * * without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any condition performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind He was pleased to pass by and ordain to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of His vindictive justice." But at the same time those who accepted and stood by this doctrine and those who rejected and denounced it agreed that somehow or other, in consequence of Adam's Fall, all mankind became totally indisposed to holiness and incapable of the least act of true righteousness, except by the intervention of the Holy Spirit: that

no sinner ever did or ever will repent, believe, and become what God requires, of his own free choice, without such divine intervention overruling his hereditary predisposition to evil; that whatever apparent and commonly understood good an unregenerate person may do, it is no ground of hope for acceptance with God as true righteousness; that all persons who die in sin, out of Christ, must be lost forever. Even those most opposed to the doctrines of Predestination agreed substantially with their opponents in believing that God clearly foresaw the Fall in Adam, the hereditary depravity of all his posterity and consequent doom; He clearly foresaw precisely whom and the exact number that the Divine Spirit would interpose to regenerate and save, and also the remediless perdition of all the rest. They furthermore agree with them in believing that God, foreseeing all this, and knowing all this, yet proceeded to create incalculable multitudes of sentient beings whose only possible destiny was never-ending sin and misery. Now what essential difference is there between the doctrines of the two parties indicated; what difference in the nature of things as respects either the moral obligation and practical duty of men on the one hand, or the character and honor of God on the other? And yet these parties kept up for generations and indeed in their successors still keep up a vigorous and oftentimes a bitter dispute on such questions—questions growing out of their metaphysical, abstract, speculations as — (1) Whether or not God fore-ordained the specific results which

He foresaw would inevitably come to pass ;—(2) Whether or not man can do any kind of good that will be acceptable to God ; anything to put himself in the way of being regenerated by the Holy Spirit in spite of his hereditary depravity ;—(3) Whether Christ made an atonement for all mankind or for those only who should be finally saved according to the foreknowledge of God ;—(4) Whether he has any natural ability, though with moral ability, to do anything to further his own regeneration and redemption ;—(5) Whether or not Ministers of Christ, believing that God either fore-ordained or foresaw what the end would be—who and what number would be saved and who and what number would be damned—ought to address all men indiscriminately, sinners and saints alike, in that practical, common-sense way which assumes that they each and all possess a certain freedom of will, have some power to do what God requires, to know and obey His commandments. On these and kindred topics, growing out of the Lutheran and Calvinist, or Calvinist and Arminian speculative hypotheses, have discussions been going on and belligerent attitudes been maintained in different branches of the Protestant Church from near the beginning of its existence. And to what purpose ? What practical, moral, or spiritual difference, I ask again, is there between the opposing forces in the conflict ? Both are in the wrong, if not in the mystical tenets which distinguish and separate them from each other, yet palpably so in the far more important ones in which they are united. On that common ground neither

of them can stand approved in the great judicatory of eternal Truth.

4. In regard to the distinctive ecclesiastical features of the Lutheran Church, it seems to me that it proved itself weak and ineffective, accomplishing little in the way of honoring and promoting in the world that "liberty wherewith Christ maketh free." It threw off the tyranny of the Pope and his allied sovereigns but entered into relations with temporal princes and potentates scarcely less exacting in their demands, for the sake of their patronage and help. "The supreme rulers of every Lutheran State," says Mosheim, "are clothed with the dignity and perform the functions of supremacy in the church." Thus, while holding theoretically to the doctrine of "the universal priesthood of all believers" and maintaining that "all hierarchical organizations are unchristian" these Sixteenth Century reformers became voluntarily subject to the civil power, even in the administration of religious affairs. They had no scruples against the union of church and state and none in calling upon the the state to aid them by force and arms in carrying out their various designs. As in the days of Constantine the cross led the sword through blood to victory, so was it not infrequently with them under the new dispensation. They trusted much to the civil power of the countries in which they predominated, paid it willing homage in return for favors received, allowed its sovereign head to convene by royal decree their ecclesiastical councils and its representatives to participate in them, and

yielded cheerful obedience to its requirements. They seemed to regard the church practically as the servant and handmaid of the state, to give it sanctity and support, and in no wise to interfere with its ambitious projects, or hold up to it a high ideal of civic and national righteousness. So dependent did the church of that day come to be upon the state, and so subservient to it, that much of its power for good in the world, by way of advancing a pure and transforming Christianity, was lost. In the particular respect under notice—in respect to the attitude of the German Reformed Church toward civil government based upon military force and the war-making power, it had little to commend it to the favor of those richly imbued with the spirit of Christ; it had made but a short day's march from the Babylon of Romanism whence it came.

5. And much the same judgment must be rendered concerning that church if we consider thoughtfully the theological doctrines which it avowed and promulgated. As has been already stated it declared unhesitatingly and unqualifiedly its adhesion to the three ancient creeds held as authoritative in the Roman communion. Nor did it in any of its statements or confessions of faith ever proclaim or profess anything essentially different—more reasonable, more just, more Scriptural, more Christly. From none of those statements or confessions does it appear that God ever purposed or desired to save more than a favored minority of the human race; or that regeneration and salvation consist in making men and women morally and spiritually

Christlike in thought, in deed, in character, but chiefly in preparing them for and taking them to the heaven of a future world; that personal righteousness is in itself of any great importance; that obedience to the law of love to God and man is the paramount obligation; but that to believe certain dogmas and to observe certain rites is indispensable to acceptance with God here and hereafter. Nor does it appear from any of them that the church can or ought to attempt to institute an order of social and civil life essentially higher and better than that which now exists — more fraternal, beneficent, and divine; or that the church has any authority or commission to lead all other agencies and activities in bringing the kingdom of righteousness, brotherhood, and peace into the world. In this particular there is little to give the Reformed Lutheran Church pre-eminence; little to justify the claim made for it, that its rise and the movement it represented marked one of the most important and noteworthy events in human history — the opening of a transcendently glorious era in the progress of mankind.

6. But if the movement thus represented is not entitled to the celebrity and renown generally ascribed to it by reason of its ecclesiasticism, its general policy in relation to civil government, its theology, or its maintenance of a high standard of personal and social righteousness, is it entitled to them for any reason that can satisfy a high-minded Christian man; one who is resolved to test all things by the principles of eternal truth as seen

in the light that shines upon the ways of men from Bethlehem and Calvary? I believe it is. And upon the ground that it was in a certain definite and highly important sense a veritable arraignment of a tyrannical usurpation which had held the world in thrall a thousand years; the breaking away from a despotism that for ages had throttled human thought and speech and shut the gates of knowledge as well as of mercy on mankind; the beginning of the end of a system of religious bigotry and domination which can never again rise to supremacy while time endures. Moreover it finds equal or perhaps greater justification and cause for being honored on the positive side. Its proclamation of the right of private judgment in matters of religion, of liberty of conscience, and of an open Bible for all men, prepared the way for a new era to the coming dwellers on the face of the earth, and made straight and plain the high road for all lovers of freedom, of truth, of righteousness, of man, and of God, to walk in evermore. What if those making this proclamation were not aware of the length and breath and height and depth of meaning contained in what they affirmed; what if they shrank from the application and use of the principles they avowed, builded better than they knew, and were unconscious of what their utterances would lead to as the years went by! It matters not. The proclamation was made and was destined to stand. The truth was set free and it has gone forth, East, West, North, South, and will go, till it encircles the globe and gains the victory, in all lands and

climes, among all peoples. "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." He spoke to these German Reformers. Something of His word they heard and sent it abroad to quicken and redeem the world. All honor to them for their hallowed ministry. All praise to God, the Giver of all good, who called them to that ministry and directed it to great and glorious issues for mankind.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

PRESBYTERIANS, CONGREGATIONALISTS, AND REGULAR BAPTISTS.

“I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”—*Rom.* xi. 25, 26.

John Calvin, a native of Noyon, near Paris, France, was a contemporary of Martin Luther and his fellow-reformers, whose labors and testimonies in the cause of religion were reviewed and judged in my last Discourse. In a very important sense he was their co-adjutor—one of the great leaders of the movement called Protestantism, whose influence will be felt and whose names will be honored as long as the world shall stand or the memory of noble deeds endure. As already indicated he differed from Luther on certain points of doctrine, and especially upon that of Election and Reprobation. He was more radically anti-Romanistic than his German colleague, though not more uncompromising in his testimony against Papal usurpation and corruption. He was a strong-minded, learned,

logical, consistent theologian, who disdained to shrink from the legitimate conclusions of his own premises or to equivocate in stating and defending them. The first churches founded by him or through his influence took on his distinctive theological character; were composed of what have since been termed High or Extreme Calvinists, which, in my judgment, are the only true or self-consistent Calvinists.

It was not long, however, before a considerable number of Calvin's disciples, or of those who were deemed such, began to question some of his more radical opinions and finally to reject them altogether, resulting in the formation of churches and denominations which, though representing more moderate views, still claimed to belong to the Calvinistic family, and may be regarded accordingly. While avowing belief in the widely known "Five Points" of him whose name they bear, they claim the right of interpreting them as their judgment and moral sense may dictate, responsible only to God for the conclusions to which they in good conscience come. In matters outside of strict theology—in church government, in ceremonial observance, etc., they differ much from each other and separate into varying parties, sects, or schools of ecclesiasticism, respectively. Thus we find that there are Calvinistic Episcopalians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, scattered here and there throughout Protestantdom, each maintaining a distinctive organization based upon doctrines, principles, ceremonies, or modes of administration, irrespective of

those tenets derived from the French Reformer, in which they, nominally at least, are agreed. It will not be possible for me to treat all these several classes separately, but I will bring those most closely allied together, selecting for examination a statement of faith which, I think, will fairly represent those immediately concerned. In doing this, however, I shall bear in mind the fact that in the churches which I name there is a vast amount of dissent, sometimes to the extent of complete denial, from the recognized and professed standards themselves. I will pass in review

I. THE PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS.

These two Denominations are distinguished from each other chiefly in the matter of church government. With the former the ruling power is the Presbytery, composed of elders or presbyters who are chosen by the people but who must be ordained to their office by properly constituted predecessors, while with the latter the people have a direct voice in the management of affairs, corresponding to democratic methods in concerns of state. Each of these has its merits and demerits, which I do not propose to discuss at present further than to say that the merits of the two, together with some in Episcopacy, ought to be combined, to the exclusion of the demerits, as will be the case in the church of the future, which will be a return to the ecclesiasticism of Apostolic times. In regard to doctrine it is proper to state that there are so

many shades of interpretation and opinion in the bodies named that no one confession of faith can be found that will justly represent each and every communicant, and I am obliged by the limitations of time and space to take for examination and criticism one which I think is expressive of the convictions of the large majority of those desirous of being known as either Presbyterians or Congregationalists. [I use the term Congregationalists in this discussion in its popular though inappropriate sense as applying only to those of the Trinitarian school, well aware that our Unitarian brethren are equally entitled to the name.] I am inclined to think that the Creed and accompanying Declaration which the Professors of the Andover Theological Seminary are required to subscribe before entering upon the duties of their office, will serve my purpose as well as any, and with as much justice as any to all persons and parties concerned. Though regarded as strictly a Congregationalist manifesto, it is a fairly rendered summary of the so-called Westminster Assembly's Catechism, which is the recognized doctrinal foundation of the Presbyterian Church wherever existing. I present the documents in full, not because I have occasion to examine their numerous specifications in detail, many of them being substantially the same as are to be found in the church standards already considered, but to present a comparative view of modern Calvinistic theology and that which I derive from the Gospel history, and to set forth in a few expository observations the variance as well as the accordance between them.

CREED.

“ I believe that there is one, and but one, living and true GOD; that the word of GOD, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only perfect rule of faith and practice; that, agreeably to those Scriptures, GOD is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; that in the God-head are three Persons, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST; and that these THREE are ONE GOD, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; that GOD created man after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; that the glory of GOD is man's chief end, and the enjoyment of GOD his supreme happiness; that this enjoyment is derived solely from conformity of heart to the moral character and will of GOD; that ADAM, the federal head and representative of the human race, was placed in a state of probation, and that, in consequence of his disobedience, all his descendants were constituted sinners; that, by nature, every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God; and that, previously to the renewing agency of the DIVINE SPIRIT, all his moral actions are averse to the character and glory of GOD; that, being morally incapable of recovering the image of his CREATOR, which was lost in ADAM, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation; so that, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of GOD; that GOD, of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, and that He entered into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of this state of sin and misery by a REDEEMER: that the only REDEEMER of the elect is the eternal SON of GOD, who, for this purpose, became man, and continues to be GOD and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever; that CHRIST, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a Prophet, Priest, and King; that, agreeably to the covenant of redemption, the SON of GOD, and he alone, by his sufferings and death, has made atonement for the sins of all men; that repentance, faith, and holiness, are the personal requisites in

the gospel scheme of salvation; that the righteousness of CHRIST is the only ground of a sinner's justification; that this righteousness is received through faith; and that this faith is the gift of GOD; so that our salvation is wholly of grace; that no means whatever can change the heart of a sinner, and make it holy; that regeneration and sanctification are effects of the creating and renewing agency of the HOLY SPIRIT, and that supreme love to God constitutes the essential difference between saints and sinners; that, by convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds, working faith in us, and renewing our wills, the HOLY SPIRIT makes us partakers of the benefits of redemption: and that the ordinary means by which these benefits are communicated to us, are the word, sacraments, prayers; that repentance unto life, faith to feed upon CHRIST, love to GOD, and new obedience, are the appropriate qualifications for the Lord's Supper; and that a Christian church ought to admit no person to its holy communion, before he exhibits credible evidence of his godly sincerity; that perseverance in holiness is the only method of making our calling and election sure; and that the final perseverance of saints, though it is the effect of the special operation of God on their hearts, necessarily implies their own watchful diligence; that they who are effectually called, do, in this life, partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which do either accompany or flow from them; that the souls of believers, are, at their death, made perfect in holiness. and do immediately pass into glory; that their bodies, being still united to CHRIST will, at the resurrection, be raised up to glory, and that the saints will be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God, to all eternity; but that the wicked will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and, with devils, be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever. I moreover believe that GOD, according to the counsel of His own will, and for His own glory, hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and that all beings, actions, and events, both in the natural and moral world, are under His providential direction; that GOD's decrees perfectly

consist with human liberty, GOD's universal agency with the agency of man, and man's dependence with his accountability; that man has understanding and corporeal strength to do all that God requires of him; so that nothing but the sinner's aversion to holiness prevents his salvation; that it is the prerogative of GOD to bring good out of evil, and that He will cause the wrath and rage of wicked men and devils to praise Him; and that all the evil which has existed, and will forever exist, in the moral system, will eventually be made to promote a most important purpose, under the wise and perfect administration of that ALMIGHTY BEING, who will cause all things to work for His own glory, and thus fulfill all His pleasure."

DECLARATION.

"And, furthermore, I do most solemnly promise that I will open and explain the Scriptures to my pupils with integrity and faithfulness; that I will maintain and inculcate the Christian faith, as expressed in the creed, by me now repeated, together with all the other doctrines and duties of our holy religion, so far as may appertain to my office, according to the best light GOD shall give me, and in opposition, not only to Atheists and Infidels, but to Jews, Papists, Mahometans, Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Sabelians, Unitarians, and Universalists, and to all heresies and errors, ancient and modern, which may be opposed to the gospel of CHRIST, or hazardous to the souls of men; that by my instruction, counsel, and example, I will endeavor to promote true piety and godliness; that I will consult the good of this INSTITUTION, and the peace of the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ on all occasions; and that I will religiously conform to the constitution and laws of this SEMINARY, and to the statutes of this foundation."

REMARKS.

I. In regard to the distinctive doctrines of the Trinity and its adjuncts, The Fall of Man, Total

Depravity, Election and Reprobation, Vicarious Atonement, Miraculous Regeneration, The Resurrection of the Body, A Day of Judgment, and Endless Punishment, this Andover pronunciamento does not differ essentially from those already considered, and I will not recapitulate what I have said upon those points in previous discussions, only affirming that in my judgment this is as defective in the particulars specified and as worthy of rejection as any of the others. None of the doctrines named have been radically improved or relieved of their questionable features by exchanging their ancient or medieval phraseology for that of the Nineteenth Century. They are the same mystical, irrational, unscriptural, and, in some respects, immoral dogmas as when they appeared in old-time garb, at Geneva, Augsburg, or far away Nicea.

2. The moral character and government of God, as represented in this Creed, are no better than they appear in those referred to; they could not well be worse. The Divine Being, in this modern portraiture of Him, is as selfish as before; as selfish as He is mighty; seeking His own sovereign exaltation and deific glory, though it be in the reprobation, wrath, rage, torture, and endless execrations of countless devils and incorrigibly unrepentant human souls. From all eternity He planned a universe which should at last become the theater of a divided and forever irreconcilable empire; one small province of which should be loyal to Him and inconceivably happy in such loyalty; all the rest, by far the larger portion, remaining in a state

of rebellion which He could never overcome, and whose subjects He could never win to His service, having been doomed to writhe and agonize in sin and misery world without end. He foreordained exactly what should come to pass; created Adam and put him on probation for his entire posterity, knowing it would issue in the total depravity of all of them and in the never-ending hostility of the greater part of them to Him and their utter ruin; He elected the few that would be saved to immortal honor and blessedness, and foreordained the remainder to "shame and everlasting contempt." He could have secured the salvation and happiness of the whole race of mankind had He impartially done for all through the agency of Christ and the Holy Spirit that which He did for the few, but, strange as it may seem, it was not His pleasure and not to His glory. And to crown the climax of His adorable (?) justice He regards the non-elect as guilty and deserving of interminable torments in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever," as if by Adam's sin they had not been rendered "morally incapable of recovering the image of their Creator" without "the renewing agency of the Holy Spirit" which He, of His good pleasure, does not see fit to grant them. By divine decree they were left "with corporeal strength to do all that God requires," but shorn of all moral strength, and so were utterly helpless and incapacitated for any such service. For not repenting when they had no power to repent, for not having faith in Christ's righteousness, which

alone could justify them, when that faith, which is the gift of God, was not granted them, they must writhe in hopeless agony

“While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

Such is the conception of God and of His dealings with men as represented in the Andover Creed, to be faithfully maintained and inculcated by the professors of the Andover Theological Seminary against Atheists, Jews, Papists, Arminians, Unitarians, Universalists, and other sceptics and heretics. Does it not seem incredible that myriads of intelligent, educated, high-minded people could be so deluded as to believe that our universe is under the direction of such a Being, and above all that He is the God whom Christ revealed as the Father of all mankind?

3. Under this conception of the divine government of the universe it follows, as a matter of course, that the great ideas of the divine Fatherhood and of human Brotherhood, which are fundamental to my system of faith and which must be made of indispensable importance as working forces in the church that is to lead the world's civilization progressively onward and upward to universal holiness, peace, and blessedness, could have no basis in the realities of things, and all reference to them, sublime and ennobling as they are, is therefore in logical and moral consistency passed by. To have recognized them and given them prominence in this Andover platform would have

introduced elements irreconcilably antagonistic to its predominating spirit and purpose.

4. What then must be the legitimate and inevitable moral and social fruits of such a system? Taken as a whole and considered in its practical tendency and effect they must in the nature of things be (1) Contempt of reason, and the blind acceptance of doctrines opposed to the unperverted judgment and common sense of mankind as truth, which is virtual self-stultification. (2) Bigotry and religious exclusiveness towards all unbelievers and dissenters, however worthy, conscientious, Christ-like they may be. (3) Denunciation, threats of damnation in the future world, and penal persecution in this world (where there is temporal power), towards alleged heretics and opponents. (4) Compulsory recognition of the adopted standard of faith, enforced taxation for the support of religious institutions based upon that standard wherever civil government can be controlled by its adherents. (5) The sanction of so-called righteous war, capital punishment, legalized oath-taking, and other practices, more or less cruel and vindictive, and so opposed to the principles and spirit of the Gospel. To the clear-seeing, high-minded Christian these things are an offence and an abomination, without warrant or excuse.

5. But in thus declaring what I conceive to be the legitimate results of belief in such a Creed as that under notice, I would freely and gladly admit the fact that they do not always or in these later times frequently follow the profession or acceptance

of such a Creed. In considering the subject in all its bearings it becomes us to distinguish between the necessary fruits of a man's professed belief and the fruits of his own innate religious instincts and moral consciousness; also between the fruits of his professed belief and the results of his environment, the age he lives in, etc. The truth in this matter is, that there are manifold forces or agencies that go to the making of character, or the shaping of one's life and conduct, of which his speculative opinions upon theological subjects constitute but a part, and oftentimes a very subordinate part, or possibly no appreciable part at all. In many cases theological opinions are purely intellectual concepts or abstractions, having no place in the heart, out of which are the issues of life. Hence we oftentimes see men unspeakably better than their creed, and other men worse than their creeds. And it would be a most unwarrantable and false conclusion, as a rule, to infer that because a man has a bad creed—an unreasonable creed—an immoral creed, he is therefore a bad or immoral man; as it would to infer that because a man has a good creed he must needs be a good man. Men are to be judged in other ways. "By their fruits ye shall know them," was the Master's rule, and a very safe rule it is. And judging by this rule I know and am happy to confess that multitudes of people who have made avowal of faith in the Andover Creed or similar ones have been among the excellent of the earth—most Christ-like—not because, but in spite of their creeds.

And so one may say, Judge not a person, a party, a denomination, so far a character is concerned, by the belief or theory professed, but "judge righteous judgment."

II. THE CALVINISTIC BAPTISTS.

The distinguishing feature of those Protestant bodies that bear the name of Baptists is their inflexible adhesion to the theory and practice of immersion as the only Scriptural mode of Christian baptism, in contradistinction from that of sprinkling so generally employed as a rite by which members are admitted into the church. They are divided into two classes, those holding to the Arminian doctrine of the freedom of the will, of whom I shall speak in a later Discourse, and the so-called Regular or Associate Baptists, the subjects of present remark. Theologically, these are Moderate Calvinists, as they are Congregationalists in respect to church government. It is greatly to the credit of this Denomination in its every department that it has stood bravely for civil and religious liberty throughout its entire history, and has never been guilty of openly persecuting dissentients or those deemed heretics for opinion's sake. This may be owing in part to the fact that until a recent date its confessors have been in the minority, both in this and the mother country—have been regarded as heretics themselves and suffered much obloquy and disrepute if not outrage and violence by their assumed-to-be superiors in church and state.

The doctrinal views of the Regular Baptists are stated in full in a Declaration of Faith put forth some years ago by the Baptist Convention in New Hampshire, which Declaration has not to my knowledge been essentially modified since, either as a result of the higher criticism or of growth of thought, and which is believed to express with little variation the prevailing sentiments of the great majority of those entitled to the Baptist name. That Declaration is a lengthy document, drawn up in logical form and expressed in ingenious rhetoric. It arrays what is properly known as "Orthodoxy" in fine velvet and satin, with ornate head-dress and silver slippers. It is not needful that I reproduce it in these pages, being in substance so much like what has appeared more than once before. It embodies the theology of the post-Apostolic and medieval ages, though wearing the robes of modern speech and scholarship. But it is the same essential theory of the universe—the same objectionable conception of God, Man, Christ, Salvation, Destiny. It gives us a Triune God, a fallen race, a scheme of redemption involving vicarious atonement and imputed righteousness, and a final issue of holiness and happiness for a few but of sin and anguish for the many of the children of men,—a condition fixed at the day of judgment and impossible of subsequent modification or reversal. For, judged by any standard of measurement recognized by this or any other professedly orthodox authority, the proportion of the saved to the lost must be exceedingly fractional. So much for a

God said to be "worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love." So much for a Christ, every way qualified to be "a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior." And so much, I would add, for an arch deceiver—a Satan, who gets the better of the Almighty at the beginning of human existence on the earth, luring all mankind from their proper allegiance to their rightful sovereign, and holding the vast majority, despite all that God can do to recover His rebellious creatures, subject to his own unhallowed sway forever and ever!!

The emphasis which these Baptist brethren lay upon water baptism by immersion is so great and so different from that of other professed Christians that I may as well quote the article of their creed relating to it entire, thereby rendering my comments upon it more intelligible. It reads as follows:—

"12. That Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; to shew forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its purifying power; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ—preceded always by solemn self-examination."

And this they profess and avow in the face of John the Baptist's declaration, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you

with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (*Matt.* iii. 11.) Also of another passage; "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (*Acts* i. 5.) These and kindred testimonies teach me conclusively that water baptism by immersion or otherwise, is not *Christian* baptism but *John's* baptism, and that distinctive Christian baptism is a cleansing of the soul from sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism, in whatever form administered, may have its uses, as a symbol or emblem of inward regeneration or as a mode of initiation into the church, but in itself it can have no soul-purifying or renewing power whatever. Nor is it ever said in the Scriptures that it is designed to show forth "our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour," but to be observed as a sign of our death to sin and resurrection to newness of life by a spiritual baptism. Moreover the assumption that water baptism is "a pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper," is a gratuitous inference, indefensible from the New Testament, contrary to reason, and unchristian in spirit. It is only calculated to promote bigotry and build up a sect, not to improve Christian character and life.

The Baptists have a most excellent supplement to their Creed, denominated a "Church Covenant," to be entered into by all who formally unite in fellowship with them. It is a mutual agreement and pledge "solemnly and joyfully" made "to walk together in him (Christ) with brotherly love,"

“to exercise a mutual care, as members one of another, to promote the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to the end that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” They furthermore engage that “we will uphold the public worship of God,” “cheerfully contribute of our property for the support of the poor,” etc.; that “we will not omit closet and family religion at home,” nor neglect “the great duty of religiously training up our children and those under our care”; “that we will walk circumspectly with the world,” in order to win souls; “that we will frequently exhort, and, if occasion require, admonish one another in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we be tempted”; and that “there is on us a special obligation henceforth to walk in newness of life.”

This Covenant is certainly admirable on account of the high and holy life therein pledged. If the pledges and promises and the various Christian duties acknowledged and agreed to be performed, be kept in any good degree, then will those making them prove that they have been born again, not after the flesh but after the spirit. Under such a moral regimen and administration none could be masters while others were slaves in the same church, as was formerly the case in the Southern states; nor would one live luxuriously in a palace while another pined for the necessities of life in a hovel or was sent off to the world's almshouse for support. One would not be driving sharp bargains with another, growing rich by his impoverishment, as is done by

the unregenerate, unbaptized commonalty of mankind. The spirit of true brotherhood in the church would prevail and the kingdom of God would in a large degree have come to it. As it is, however, the Baptists stand about on a level with other sects in these respects, and in respect to Christian piety and morality generally, as they do with many people outside of all church relations. They maintain the respectabilities of current civilization, exemplify many personal and social virtues, but show little disposition or ability to rebuild even their own church on the primitive foundations; much less to take up the work of re-organizing human society and of inaugurating the kingdom of God on the earth.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE SEVERAL ARMINIAN DENOMINATIONS— METHODISTS, ETC.

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of hearers.”—2 *Tim.* ii. 14.

The religious bodies which are to be examined and criticized in this Discourse derive their distinctive theological doctrines, as well as the general name I apply to them, from James Arminius, a native of Holland, born in 1560. He was distinguished even in youth for his learning and high character, being offered the degree of D. D. by the University of Basel when but 23 years of age; which honor he, however, declined, saying that “for so young a face to bear that title would diminish its dignity.” He was elected to the office of minister of the church in Amsterdam, where he attained such distinction for his ability that he was urged to undertake the defence of the Calvinistic tenet of predestination, which had been violently attacked by some of the more radical polemic controversialists of that day. He undertook the task, but, in preparing for it, was persuaded that the position he was to maintain, though accordant with his own

previously entertained ideas, was indefensible, either by reason or from the Scriptures. He therefore abandoned it and began the advocacy of opinions adverse thereto, rising in due time to the leadership of the opposition, and, as it proved, becoming the founder of a new school in theology among the reformers of his time. This created a great agitation in ecclesiastical circles and drew down upon himself and his devotees the anathemas of all the Calvinistic Protestants of Europe, who then seemed to be largely in the majority, especially in the Netherlands and France.

It would be amusing if it were not so sadly pitiful and deplorable to review the bitter controversies, not infrequently characterized by gross injustice and cruelty, which sprang up between the Calvinists and Arminians, and were continued with more or less virulence for several generations. These two parties were in singular agreement upon most points of theological speculation; upon the Divine Nature, the Fall of Man, the office of Christ, and the endless sin and misery of the great mass of mankind who die impenitent. But exactly how and why God was to save the few and damn the many was the great question at issue between them. "Predestination" and "Free Grace" were the respective battle-cries of the belligerent forces. Starting from premises mainly common to both, the Calvinists seemed to have the more logic on their side and came more directly to an inevitable conclusion. But their conclusion was "a monster of such frightful mein, that to be hated need but

be seen." So the Arminians, governed by their human instincts, maintained, and so the common sense of the more thoughtful multitude affirmed; and even the victorious logicians themselves were sometimes so horrified at the goblin that their own speculations had created as to shrink back from it or to try and soften its hideous features into tolerable comeliness. Hence the Moderate Calvinists, of which I spoke before, constituting about the only kind of Calvinists to be found in our day. Hence also the revolt of Arminius, who, of a less arrogant and determined nature than Calvin, was constitutionally disposed to a tolerant theology; but who, like Melancthon and other complaisant spirits, tried to be liberal and yet differ as little as possible from the sterner, more resolute dogmatists enthroned in popular favor. This will be seen in the formulated statement of his Five Points of Arminianism, which he put in contrast with the famous Five Points of Calvinism, and which may be understood as embodying not only his views, but the views of his proper followers — Methodists, Free Will Baptists, Disciples, Friends or Quakers, many Episcopalians, etc., to the present time. That statement I transcribe verbatim from McClintock's and Strong's *Cyclopædia*, to which reference has already been made, presuming it is authentic and reliable.

1. "God, by an eternal and inscrutable decree, ordained in Jesus Christ, His Son, before the foundation of the world, to save in Christ, because of Christ, and through Christ, from out of the human race, which is fallen and subject to

sin, those who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, believe in the name of His Son, and who, by the same grace, persevere unto the end in that faith and the obedience of faith; but on the contrary to leave in sin and subject to wrath those who are not converted, and are unbelieving, and to condemn them as aliens from Christ according to the Gospel. *John* iii. 36.

2. "To which end Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all and each one, so that he has gained for all, through the death of Christ, reconciliation and remission of sins; on this condition, however, that no one in reality enjoys that remission of sins except the faithful man, and this, too, according to the Gospel. *John* iii. 16, and 1 *John* ii. 2.

3. "But man has not from himself, or by the power of his free will saving faith, inasmuch as in the state of defec-tion and sin he cannot think or do for himself anything good, which is indeed, really good, such as saving faith is; but it is necessary for him to be born again and renewed by God, in Christ, through His Holy Spirit, in his mind, affections, or will, and all his faculties; so that he may be able to understand, think, wish, and perform something good, according to that saying of Christ in *John* xv. 5.

4. "It is this grace of God which begins, promotes, and perfects everything good, and this to such a degree that even the regenerate man, without this preceding or adventitious grace, exciting, consequent, and co-operating, can neither think, wish, or do anything good, nor even resist an evil temptation; so that all the good works which we can think of are to be attributed to the grace of God in Christ. But as to the manner of the operation of that grace, it is not irresistible; for it is said of many that they resisted the Holy Spirit in *Acts* vii. 51 and many other places.

5. "Those who are grafted into Christ by a true faith, and therefore partake of his vivifying Spirit, have abundance of means whereby they may fight against Satan in the world and their own flesh, and obtain the victory; always, however, by the aid of the grace of the Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ assists them

by his Spirit in all temptations, and stretches out his hand; and provided they are ready for the contest, and seek his aid and are not wanting to their duty, he strengthens them to such a degree that they cannot be seduced or snatched from the hands of Christ by any power of Satan or violence, according to that saying, *John* x. 28, 'No one shall pluck them out of my hand.' But whether these very persons cannot, by their own negligence, desert the commencement of their being in Christ, and embrace again the present world, fall back from the holy doctrine once committed to them, make shipwreck of their conscience, and fall from grace; this must be more fully examined and weighed by the Holy Scriptures, before men can teach it with full tranquility of mind and confidence. The last proposition was modified by the followers of Arminius so as to assert the possibility of falling from grace."—*McClintock and Strong*.

The same authority says, "The Arminian doctrine on predestination is now widely diffused in the Protestant world. It is, in the main, coincident with that of the Lutherans in Germany; is held by the Wesleyan Methodist Churches throughout the world; by a large part of the Church of England and by many of the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. It is substantially the doctrine (on the question of predestination) of the Greek and Roman Churches and is also held by several of the minor sects." The same is probably true of the more liberal of the Trinitarian Congregationalists, whose general views are known by the name of "The New Orthodoxy," although they would doubtless prefer to state their belief in their own language rather than in that of Arminius.

The largest organized Protestant body representing Arminianism in the world today, so far as it was a protest against the earlier and more rigid Calvinism, is, as I have intimated, undoubtedly the Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in England about the year 1740 by the brothers, John and Charles Wesley; the growth of which church in numbers, in extent of territory covered, and in influence, is one of the most striking phenomena of modern times. I shall do no injustice to other less notable Methodist sects, or to sects bearing other names holding essentially Arminian views, if I make the Episcopal Methodists my special subject of remark at this time; what I have to say being generally applicable to all in agreement with them upon points of doctrine now under consideration. The Methodist Standard of Faith, with the omission of fourteen articles is like that of the Church of England in substance, though there are slight variations of phraseology adapting it to the changed circumstances under which the two denominations exist. The omitted articles and their subjects are; (3) On Christ's Descent into Hell; (8) The Ancient Creeds; (13) Good Works before Justification; (15) Sinlessness of Christ; (17) Predestination and Election; (18) Salvation only in Christ's name; (20) Authority of the Church; (21) Authority of the General Councils; (23) Calling to the Ministry; (26) Unworthy Ministers do not make the Sacraments void; (28) Wicked Communicants at the Lord's Table; (33) Avoiding Excommunicated Persons; (35) Homilies; (36) Consecration of Bishops

and Ministers. There is no necessity of quoting the accepted articles since it is easy to refer to them in Discourses XX, XXI, if the reader desires. I continue my examination of the Arminian Theology which underlies Methodism and kindred forms of belief by a few

COMMENTS.

1. No doubt the Statement of Arminianism as quoted must be tiresome if not vexatious to clear-headed Calvinists, as indeed it is to other intelligent people of whatever creed they may be. It is much convolved, blindly expressed, to some extent contradictory. Let us, at the risk of repetition, look at some of its asseverations with a discerning, impartial eye, and see how hazy, bewildering, and indefensible they are. It asserts that man cannot of himself think or do any good thing; anything to gain or promote his salvation except by the aid of the Holy Spirit; he cannot believe in the name of Christ, which is the essential condition of salvation, but by the same divine help. It also asserts that God ordained before the foundations of the world were laid to save such and only such as should believe in Christ and persevere in that belief. Left to itself, therefore, no soul would or could be saved; and only such would or could be saved as the Holy Spirit might induce to seek salvation by faith in Christ. But every soul is salvable. Christ died for all and each, and gained for all reconciliation and remission of sins. Then why will not all be saved? They would if God by

the Holy Spirit should do for all what He does for those whom He has ordained to save. But why does He not thus befriend the entire human race and so bring all mankind to holiness and happiness at last? The only answer the Arminian can give to this question is that He did not choose such a course as wisest and best. That is, He chose to do for some totally depraved sinners what was indispensable to their eternal welfare, and to withhold the same gracious aid from the rest because such seemingly partial and inconsistent course was wisest and best. But is not this virtually what Calvinism affirms, only that *it* makes the final result to depend upon an original divine decree, and Arminianism makes the same final result depend upon the divine action or non-action at a later point of time? And does this relieve God from the charge of cruel and indefensible severity which the Arminians claimed was the horrible feature of the Calvinistic system? Not at all, so far as I can see. Indeed, the Calvinistic system seems to me the most logically consistent and the no less moral system of the two. Yet it shocks the ordinary Arminian, who, in his attempted self-justification, muddles both logic and Scripture alike, without exculpating the Divine Being, even by his own sophisms. He pleads that God is horribly partial and unjust in electing some to salvation and reprobating others to damnation. Yet his own system makes God sentence all the posterity of Adam to a state of total depravity and endless woe for their ancestor's sin—a state from which it is absolutely impossi-

ble for any to obtain deliverance save as God intervenes, and, by the power of His grace, brings them to a saving faith in Christ as the condition of such deliverance. But as God does not intervene of His own free will in the case of the finally lost, does He not virtually choose that they shall be so lost? And is that any better, morally considered, than to predestinate them at the beginning to such a fate? Not one whit. In this respect there is little to choose between the systems in comparison. Both virtually ascribe the same derogatory and abominable character to God, and proclaim the same appalling destiny to incalculable myriads of mankind.

2. It is quite worth while to look a little farther into the argument by which Arminianism seeks to justify itself in its own estimation and before the world. Its arraignment of Calvinism was on the ground that it made God arbitrary, partial, and to the non-elect intolerably merciless. The argumentation ran thus; "God is a Being, perfectly holy, just, good to all mankind. He is unwilling that any should perish; He would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth; He sent His Son to make an atonement for the entire human race; He offers redemption to every one on condition of faith and repentance; all may share the divine favor and gain heaven, if they will; and if any are finally lost and go to hell it will be their own fault — the righteous result of their own choice in rejecting the offers of divine mercy and treating despitefully the pleadings of divine grace." These

and many similar declarations fortified and made more impressive by numerous apt quotations from Scripture—both Old Testament and New—were employed in setting forth the love and tender compassion of God, His mercy that endureth forever, His forgiving grace, the all sufficiency of Christ's atoning sacrifice, the brooding concern of the Holy Spirit seeking to win the sinner from the error of his ways and waiting to hear his acceptance of the proffers of pardon, accompanied by earnest exhortations and entreaties to impenitent hearers to make their peace with God, to give their hearts to Christ, to yield to the persuasions of the divine Spirit while there is yet time, and all the impassioned, fervid, sometimes lurid and ghastly implorations of revivalistic sensationalism and religious frenzy. Throughout all this rapidly-flowing and oftentimes long-drawn-out flood of declamatory rhetoric, the ordinary listener obtained not the least hint that, according to the theological system which the effusive oratory represented and was designed to promote, he, as an unconverted sinner, was utterly powerless to think or do anything good or acceptable to God—had no more ability to comply with the overtures ostensibly made to him than he had to fly to Paradise or create a world. These features of the creed under whose auspices the Gospel message came to him were kept wholly out of sight, and he was deluded concerning them—fearfully deluded, if the creed were true. And this is the fatally weak point of the Arminian theory of the divine government and of human salvation,—both logically and

practically its weak point. The utter moral inability of the sinner to comply with the divine requirements, to work out his own salvation is one of its fundamental postulates; and yet every duty enjoined upon men, every divine command or Gospel precept repeated, every appeal made, implies that those designed to be affected and benefited thereby, are as free and as able to act responsibly and favorably in reference to them as he is to rise from his bed in the morning or to attend to the ordinary labors of his daily life. This is an inconsistency, a contradiction that no plausibility or sophistry can hide from the thoughtful mind, and that no legerdemain can convert into Gospel truth. It is a defect that vitiates the whole system of which it forms a part, and renders it worthy only of disavowal and complete renunciation.

3. Another question of no trifling importance sprang up in connection with the Calvinistic-Arminian controversy, to wit: What is the final destiny of infants, and of virtuous heathen who never heard of Christ and of the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer? The primitive Christians seemed to have no trouble or anxiety about the future well-being of these classes, but after Christianity had been metamorphosed by partially converted Greek and Roman philosophers, who became its doctrinaires, the prospect for all such was at once cloudy and uncertain, and the deepening apostasy of the dark ages left no ray of hope for the unbaptized and unchurched of any class, in any portion of the great round world. But within the last century

opinions have been very much modified upon this matter, and few can now be found, whether Calvinists or Arminians, who like to be charged with holding to infant damnation or to the endless misery of honest, upright, humane Jews, Mahometans, pagans, etc. But this only proves that the old creeds are being outgrown, or at least distrusted. For if they be true in their main features, if all men are born totally depraved and subjects of God's wrath, if there be no salvation except through faith in Christ and the regenerative agency of the Holy Spirit, if there be no place for repentance and return to God after death, what hope is there, what hope can there be for any souls of any age or class, who pass from this earth-life outside the Christian church, having no consciousness or experience of regenerating faith? None whatever. And yet multitudes professing the Calvinistic or Arminian formularies declare that it is unjust to represent them as believing that there are few who will be finally saved and many hopelessly lost, inasmuch as they hold that all infants will somehow or other obtain the benefits of the atonement, and with them no one knows how many pious pagans and unchurched dwellers in Christian lands. Very well, the more the better. But if this be so, we may justly demand that those so declaring shall amend their public Confessions of Faith, so as to have them agree with their private beliefs. And we may ask them at the same time to tell us why God treats the infant children of common sinners so much better than He does their parents, brothers

and sisters, who are so unfortunate as to grow to maturer years only that they may continue in sin and be forever damned; and also how it is that virtuous people outside of Christendom should have a better chance of receiving divine favor at the judgment seat than correspondingly virtuous people, though unchurched, within its pale. But what is the testimony of Scripture upon this much debated subject? Concerning the little ones brought to him that he might bless them, Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And concerning the Gentiles, Paul declared that when they, "not having the law do by nature the things contained in the law" "they are a law unto themselves" and are to be judged accordingly. And Peter affirmed that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." And furthermore, he stated that the Gospel "was preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." These representations are agreeable to common sense, justice, and benevolence, and ought to satisfy all who seek to conform their faith with New Testament teachings, though they furnish no support for the theology of Calvinists or Arminians, as found in their books.

4. The question now seems to suggest itself, What are the comparative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism as agencies for bringing sinners to repentance and awakening the better life in human souls, or as working forces to improve the existing

moral and social conditions of mankind and build up the divine kingdom in the world? This is a difficult question to answer categorically and to general satisfaction. Arminianism appears to have been the more successful of the two in making nominal converts to Christ, in multiplying church members, and in agitating religiously the public mind and heart. Were the quality of its converts and increased members as much better as the number of them is greater than those affected by Calvinism, it would have the advantage. But that is doubtful. Granting, however, its pre-eminence in the respect named, we might still ask if it is doing more for mankind here upon earth—more to promote the real progress of civilization and to bring in the reign of righteousness, justice, brotherhood, and peace. The Calvinists can rightfully claim that, as a general thing, they wherever existing have maintained the principles of civil and religious freedom and stood for improved and improving political ideas and institutions. The Arminians can also show a good record in this particular, with a stronger tendency to toleration and liberality when in the exercise of temporal power, the genius of their *ism* being, it must be confessed, more benignant, meliorating, and progressive than that of their senior and competitor. It has done much for this reason to tone down and soften the more rigid and severe features of its long-time antagonistic faith. And by its unfaltering insistence upon its favorite doctrine of free will, it has done much to quicken the sense of moral responsibility in the

minds of the masses, to increase the consciousness of ability to do right, and to raise the popular religious estimate of the value of right doing as compared with right believing. And the emphasis its prophets have laid upon the love of God, as opposed to the mere sovereignty of God, has done much to rouse to active life the more tender and beneficent sentiments of those over whom it has had influence. But we must remember that these commendable results have been realized almost exactly to the extent that some of the most pronounced theories of Arminius himself touching human depravity and moral inability have been ignored, and the method of Jesus and the early Evangelists employed, by appealing to the better instincts and impulses of the unperverted human heart in the spirit of love to God and man.

What then is the relative standing of these two forms of faith and of their respective adherents to the practical righteousness, personal and social, of mankind in the present world? Leaving out of mind what may be termed strict pietism, the soul's attitude towards God, and all considerations drawn from a destiny of happiness or misery in a future state of being, what bearing have they upon the great evils that afflict humanity, and what are they accomplishing in the way of lifting human society to higher levels and bringing in the kingdom of God? Aside from that general, indirect influence which all sincere, honest, upright, devout men and women have upon the moral condition of the world to purify and improve it, what special, immediate

activities have they put in motion or what particular ends proposed for establishing that divine order of human life which Christianity in its larger meaning and broader application implies and involves? Do they either of them distinctly and emphatically aim at the abolition of injustice, violence, capital punishment, war, and all forms of man's inhumanity to man? Have they any scruples against oath-taking, political chicanery and trickery, or participation in sword-sustained governments? Do they see anything unchristian in the ordinary methods of money-making, money-spending, or of exercising money-acquired power? Do they feel that anything should be done to establish more just and fraternal relations between the rich and the poor, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the employer and the employed, and to bring all classes and conditions of men to act in all things according to the principles and in the spirit of true brotherhood? Do they realize that there is great need in the world of a regenerated order of social life, or that the Christian church is under any obligation to exemplify any higher type of civilization than that which prevails in the world at large? Undoubtedly there are individual men and women in both those great divisions of the nominal Christian church who see the need and feel something of the responsibility which these several inquiries suggest. But nothing in regard to the great practical matters alluded to is to be found in the organic, constitutional provisions of either of them, in the declared objects for which

they exist, or in the ecclesiastical manifestos which they have at any time sent forth into the world. Their systems contemplate nothing like a radical transformation of human society; nothing like a comprehensive co-ordination and union of all human interests and relations in one grand scheme of righteousness, fraternity, co-operation, harmony, which would fulfill the Christian promise and be the consummation of the divine plan concerning mankind upon the earth. The most and the highest they aim at in the direction indicated is to attain and maintain a reputable standing in both their personal and ecclesiastical character and relations on the common existing plane of the world's so called civilization. This is of course vastly better than to rest content with a reign of disorder, profligacy, vice, barbarism, savagery, but it is not all that Christianity contemplates, that Christianity is capable of, that Christianity requires and demands of its true disciples and representatives. Far from it. What the world needs is a regenerate church which shall transcend all the shortcomings of those under examination, rise to the realization of the primitive ideal, and be satisfied with nothing short of Christlikeness in personal character and brotherliness in the social and civil relations of man to man. When such a church shall be established and become dominant in human life, then shall the voice out of heaven, heard by the seer of Patmos, be fulfilled, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

I will bring the present Discourse to a close by noticing briefly a few objections which my Arminian brethren in common with Calvinists and all so-called Evangelicals will naturally urge against the ecclesiastical platform or basis of church organization that I offer as a substitute for theirs.

1. They will say that my scheme in ignoring the Fall of Man, Total Depravity, etc., makes neither sin nor salvation of any great account — certainly not of most momentous concern. My platform certainly ignores the theological fictions referred to, but it by no means ignores or questions the great fact of human sinfulness and guilt, not only as set forth in the Scriptures but as illustrated in the life of individual men and women, of communities, states, and nations, under all skies since time began. Nor does it underestimate in the least the importance — the supreme importance of salvation, truly considered; not salvation from God's wrath, nor from an endless hell, but salvation from sin and its consequences, deliverance from the power of evil in the heart, the dominance of the higher faculties of human nature — reason, conscience, the spiritual sense, over the lower — the animal propensities and passions, with all those lusts that war against the soul. Man's natural endowments are all good in their place, but greatly liable to perversion and abuse through selfish and sensual indulgence. Thereby have all men "sinned and come short of the glory of God." They must therefore be regenerated, born anew into a higher life; a life of purity, holiness, love; a life in which

the moral and spiritual forces hold sway, akin to the life of God. This is the indescribably important desideratum, "the chief concern of mortals here below." This is the view of sin and salvation embodied in my system. Is it not also the view plainly revealed in the Old and New Testaments?

2. It may be said that my system holds up no doctrine of retribution impressive enough to rouse the hopes and fears of the wayward and wicked and move them to repentance and a new life in righteousness. It certainly holds up no notion of infinite rewards and punishments for finite deserts; no heaven of self-exultant joy, no hell of sulphurous fire burning forevermore. Its heaven is heavenly-mindedness, blessedness, and peace. Its hell is hellish-mindedness, unrest, and misery. Its rewards are not payments of debts for benefits rendered to God but the beneficent and soul-satisfying fruits of well-doing—the inevitable accompaniments of holiness, trust, and love—an abiding sense of God's presence and divine approval. Its punishments are not retaliatory returns for injuries received, nor penal equivalents for offences against the divine law, nor inflictions of pain and torment which have no reformatory purpose or power but only confirm the sufferer in his sin to all eternity. But they are the natural results of wrong-doing, divinely-ordered chastisements for violations of the law of righteousness, proportioned always to the guilt of the offender and designed to correct his faults and turn him from the error of his ways into paths of obedience, of holiness, and of peace. They

are unescapable and must continue until the sin be put away and a new life of love to God and man begun. God in the administration of His moral government with reference to his wayward children chastises them "not after His own pleasure, but for their profit, that they may be made partakers of His holiness." (See *Heb.* xii. 5-11.)

3. Again, it may be objected that my platform makes little or nothing of Christ and his atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind. It certainly makes nothing of the claims put forth by theologues for his deity, or for any atonement he ever made in the way of placating the divine anger, or of suffering in his own person the punishment due to guilty men, that they may go free. It makes him a strictly human being in his distinctive personality, but one superior to all others in his moral and spiritual constitution and attainment, raised up and ordained of God, in the divine order of the world, to be the Christ—the Teacher, Guide, Inspirer, Saviour of mankind. It maintains that he was qualified and empowered for the discharge of the duties of the office assigned him by being infilled with the Divine Logos or Holy Spirit, which made him pre-eminently the Son of God as well as Son of man; that he was a manifestation of the will, the character, the love of God; that he lived, taught, suffered, died, and rose again according to the Scriptures; and that he was glorified in the heavenly world and will continue his work as mediator between God and men, begun here on the earth and continued in the immortal state, till he shall

have subdued all things unto himself, when he will himself become subject to the Father, "that He may be all in all." It maintains that he carried forward his mission upon the earth by his life of self-sacrificing love, by his holy instructions, by his perfect example, by his sublime death and glorious resurrection, and that through these agencies, operating now as aforesaid, will the grand consummation be reached, and the kingdoms of this world be his in righteousness and peace.

4. Once more, it may be urged that my plan does not sufficiently magnify the operations of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of regeneration, the workings of divine grace, etc. The answer to this objection may be sufficiently learned from what I have said in previous Discourses, either under the specific heads named or in a more general way while discoursing upon the Divine Being and His relations to and dealings with mankind, and I will not repeat.

5. Finally, men may say that I have no well-grounded assurance or reason for believing that a sufficient number of persons of the right kind — conscientious, high-minded, self-denying, Christlike enough — can be found who will unite in the formation and administration on a broad, comprehensive, world-embracing scale of such a church as I contemplate. Not very soon, probably. But sometime in the great future this shall be, it *must* be accomplished. Otherwise all progress is a deceit and a snare; all prophecy an illusion; Christianity a failure; and God himself is defeated in His infinite

purpose of good concerning the children of men. This I will not believe. The regenerate church will some day be built ; and, be it soon or late, my duty to do what I can for it is plain, unmistakable, and imperative. God help me to be faithful.

DISCOURSE XXV.

THE MORAVIANS AND FRIENDS.

“We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.”—
2 *Cor.* xiii. 8.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.”—*John* xv. 2.

Among the multitude of smaller Denominations or Branches of the general church of Christendom, there are many so insignificant in numbers and in influence as to demand no special consideration in a review like that in which I am now engaged. While there are others so nearly akin to those already examined, both theologically and ethically, that they may be dismissed with a few general remarks. The doctrinal characteristics of these, so far as they have formulated any, have been sufficiently analyzed, discussed, and brought into condemnation in preceding Discourses; their separation from older and larger bodies, for they were almost universally offshoots from pre-existing churches and not original creations, having been caused, not by reason of any radical divergence or change of fundamental beliefs, but on account of some minor matters of external form, rite, or ceremonial observance. It is the former—the underlying ideas, principles,

convictions of any and every denomination or religious sect, rather than any outward ordinance or ritual, that determines its real moral and spiritual status, drift, and ultimate attainment. And the average moral and spiritual condition, tendency, and result in such a case can never be higher than its fountain head; higher than the actual theological and ethical principles recognized and approved. Individuals may be better or worse than the accepted creed, but the average character and standing of the organic and closely affiliated body will always be on a level with it. No religious party, no church or denomination ever as a whole transcends its theological and ethical standard. It may fall below it. And no church or denomination is appreciably affected, morally and religiously, by its formularies and merely external ceremonies.

Hence it follows that any radical reform in a church, any raising it to a higher level of thought and conduct, to a more perfect Christian life, can be effected only by going back to fundamental theological and ethical principles and changing them for better ones, not by a modification or multiplication of external observances. Personal illumination or the quickening of the individual conscience, outside of ecclesiastical standards, or the pressure of an advancing civilization—the trend of the world's life may impel a church to mend its ways in respect to social and civil customs and institutions, as in the instance of the abolition of American Slavery or of Russian Serfdom, but unless there is an improvement in essential principles of truth and

righteousness its actual moral standing is essentially unchanged.

But while I pass thus hastily by the great majority of the minor sects for the reasons specified, there are a few of them that have a special claim upon my attention, chiefly for the reason that while they agree in some respects with the larger denominations already analyzed and are so far subject to the criticism made in some one or more of my recent Discourses, they are yet in some other particulars quite in accord with my own ideal of what a true church of Christ is, and so far command my approbation. Of several of them I will speak separately, as they are sufficiently differentiated from each other to justify distinctive consideration. I begin with

THE MORAVIANS OR SO-CALLED UNITED BRETHREN.

Personally, I know nothing of this body of Christian believers, having never visited any of their settlements or met any of their representatives, clerical or lay ; but from what I have learned of them and of their peculiarities through religious histories, cyclopædias, etc. I have formed a high opinion of them as exemplifying in marked degree the manifold excellences of a true and noble Christian character, and as constituting collectively not simply a reputable but a distinguished branch of the general Christian church. They are said to have sprung from certain Reformers of Moravia and Bohemia, who, in the year 1457, sixty years before Luther's

arraignment of the usurpation and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church, organized religious societies upon the basis of what were afterward deemed the essential principles of Protestantism, adopted rules of discipline, and took the name of "Brethren and Sisters of the Law of Christ." These Reformers and their adherents were greatly harassed and persecuted, many of their number suffering martyrdom. This only served to increase their activity and zeal, resulting in an increase of converts to such an extent that before the expiration of the century they had more than two hundred churches well equipped for effective service. They formed early and friendly relations with Luther and constituted an important element or factor of the great Reformation of which he was the reputed head. After four or five generations of remarkable prosperity, a series of persecutions was inaugurated against them by the emperor, Ferdinand II, whose hatred of all forms of Protestantism led him to adopt the most violent and bloody measures in order to overthrow it. His efforts were largely successful in the provinces named, and the church of "The Brethren" therein ceased to exist, though many of its members still cherished its faith and privately kept its germ alive in anticipation of a future transplanting to a more congenial soil. At length, after nearly a hundred years had passed away, a few Moravian families, under the leadership of one Christian David, escaped from their native country, and, after a tedious journey of eleven days, reached Berthelsdorf in Saxony, where on an immense

estate dwelt Count Zinzendorf, a pious young nobleman, who had become imbued with their spirit, and who, learning of their sufferings, offered them a refuge. Others of the faith scattered through Europe gathered there as time went on, and at the expiration of five years there was a colony of three hundred persons living on the Count's outlying territory. They built a town which they called Herrnhut, re-established the church of their fathers, and entered upon a new career of prosperity and usefulness as a component part of Christendom. It is said that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was greatly influenced to undertake the grand religious reform in England with which his name was identified, by his acquaintance with the Moravian Brethren whom he visited at Herrnhut, regarding them, both in respect to their personal piety and virtue and to their kindly, fraternal social relations, as illustrating more fully than any other people he knew the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ.

After becoming fully established in their new home these refugees inaugurated a missionary enterprise for the conversion of men to Christ and the extension of their own distinctive views, which they prosecuted with a persistency and zeal unprecedented in the history of the Protestant faith. And their efforts were crowned with marvelous success; their churches multiplying rapidly at home and their mission stations finding a place in many foreign lands. Their policy on the practical side was as far as possible to separate themselves from the world, to

form settlements of their own, where they could hold undisturbed communion with God and live together as United Brethren in Christ. As a denomination, however, they have never attained large proportions, numerically considered, though their churches are to be found in several European countries and in the United States;—their ecclesiastical jurisdiction in this country being divided into two districts, the northern and southern; the seat of government of the former being at Bethlehem, Penn., that of the latter at Salem, N. C.

Theologically the Moravians would probably be ranked with the so-called Evangelicals, adhering, as they do nominally, to the Augsburg Confession and giving special prominence to the doctrine of the Atonement, as they interpret and understand it, though they eschew all forms of dogmatism and decry the divisions and contentions of the Christian world. In describing them, Hayward in his "Book of Religions" says:—

"The Moravians avoid discussions respecting the speculative truths of religion, and insist upon individual experience of the practical efficiency of the Gospel in producing a real change of sentiment and conduct, as the only essential in religion. They consider the manifestation of God in Christ as intended to be the most beneficial revelation of the Deity to the human race, and, in consequence, they make the life, merits, acts, words, sufferings, and death of the Saviour the principal theme of their doctrine, while they carefully avoid entering into any theoretical disquisitions on the mysterious essence of the Godhead, simply adhering to the words of Scripture." "They believe that, to live agreeably to the Gospel, it is essential to aim, in all things, to fulfill the will

of God. Even in their temporal concerns, they endeavor to ascertain the will of God. They do not, indeed, expect some miraculous manifestation of His will, but only endeavor to test the purity of their purposes by the light of the divine word. Nothing of consequence is done by them, as a society, until such an examination has taken place; and, in cases of difficulty, the question is decided by lot, to avoid the undue preponderance of influential men, and in the humble hope that God will guide them right by its decision, where their limited understanding fails them." "They consider none of their peculiar regulations essential, but all liable to be altered or abandoned, whenever it is found necessary, in order better to attain their great object—the promotion of piety."

The Moravians in America have considerably changed some of their ancient socialistic arrangements, though they are still adhered to by their European brethren. They were never Communists, strictly speaking, but yet interpreted Christianity to require much more fraternity of association and mutual assistance than the generality of other churches. Their ecclesiastical system seems to be a combination of the good in Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, with little of the evil. They cultivate music and the fine arts, are patrons of education in its larger aspects, are eminently industrious and economical, have many excellent social customs, and rank high in piety and morality, in practical obedience to the law of love to God and man. Their spontaneous, world-wide missionary enterprise and zeal, already referred to, have excited the admiration and the emulation of all Christendom.

REMARKS.

I. The Moravians possess and illustrate many excellences, rarely to be found elsewhere, that are worthy of high commendation. But they are not to be followed too closely or regarded as above criticism. Their real, fundamental, theological, and ethical principles, when ascertained, are more medieval than primitive Christian, and so unsuited to the work of church reorganization on a pure Gospel basis. But they practically ignore those principles, or at least hold them in abeyance, when they eschew all metaphysical speculation and polemic discussion concerning them. They decline such speculation and discussion evidently on the ground that they provoke internal dissension and exert a demoralizing influence upon the church, as illustrated so often in the history of the differing sects of Christendom. Now if our Moravian brethren do not believe the distinctive doctrines of the Calvinistic and Arminian schools which have been examined and shown to be false, unscriptural, misleading, and pernicious, why are they not honestly and openly disowned and repudiated? Is it wise or right or Christian to hide the truth, and especially the truth touching the most sacred things, under a bushel? It may be politic to evade controversy and its responsibilities on the part of a small sect surrounded by a bold and aggressive orthodoxy, and to employ Scripture phraseology without defining what is meant by it, having it tacitly understood that it is used in the popular and long-prevailing sense; but, if it be not so used, is such a

course morally right and honorable? The truth is this silence and indefiniteness cannot continue always. The time must come, and that ere long, when the progressive intellect of those interested in religion will demand outspoken utterances on all important doctrines, and then the Moravians will be compelled to declare their views without concealment or mental reservation. The understanding as well as the religious sentiment of men must be supplied with proper food.

2. It is well to inquire why a sect of so much pietistic, moral, and ecclesiastical excellence as the Moravians possess, combined with so much missionary enterprise and zeal, remains so small and holds so insignificant a place in the religious world. I answer, because its standard of personal piety and social righteousness is too high, strict, and Christlike for popular acceptance. To make a religious body popular and secure its rapid growth it must do two things; promise its adherents indemnity against God's wrath in the next world and require of them in this world a personal and social righteousness not too far in advance of the prevailing morality of the respectable multitude; certainly not so far as to be a perpetual rebuke to the prevailing fashions, habits, customs, etc., of society at large and of civil government. In this last particular the Moravians have failed to observe the essential conditions of numerical success. Their standard has been too high, too holy, too Christlike to win the favor of the masses of mankind, and particularly of those aspiring after political or ecclesiastical

honors, emoluments, and rewards. And again, because their standard of personal and social righteousness was too high for their theology. They attempted to make themselves and their converts better than their God; to make the stream of human virtue to rise higher than its fountain;—as great an impossibility in ethics as in physics. If the Being they worshiped were half as unselfish, disinterested, merciful as they deemed it their duty to be, not one soul would ever be left to perish or given over to endless punishment, as they believed would be the case. The incongruity between their real (though unwritten) creed and their ideal life was . . . too great to render them an efficient working force in the world. They should mend their creed, or their lofty aims must suffer decline. It is to be feared that the latter alternative is taking place in these later years.

3. It will be seen at once that the Moravian Church could look with no favor upon my effort to get back to the primitive basis of Christian fellowship, co-operation, and unity of faith and practice. My scheme magnifies the understanding while theirs undervalues it. Mine makes theology and life harmonious, theirs in important respects antagonizes them. Their system of doctrine is medieval and reactionary; mine is progressive, reconstructive, prophetic of the coming kingdom of righteousness, brotherhood, peace, and joy. Commending and honoring their worth, I look for a better dispensation, even a heavenly.

THE FRIENDS.

This Denomination, and especially the more liberal and progressive section of it, has attained a much higher rank and is worthy of a much more unrestricted commendation for Christlikeness of faith and practice than the Moravians, or in fact than any other religious body in Christendom. It has never in its organic character, nor in the administration of its ecclesiastical polity divorced piety and morality, faith and works, religion and life, but maintained throughout its entire history the harmonious accord existing between the two; their intimate and indissoluble relation to each other in the Christian economy, in the development of a symmetrical character, and in the ordering of human conduct in all human affairs. It has truthfully recognized and magnified the fact of the ever-living presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the human soul as a divine Inner Light for the illumination of mankind and as a Guide in the way of duty, righteousness, and peace. It has proclaimed the superiority of this Inner Light and Guide to all sacraments and rituals, and to the mere letter of the written Word. It has emphasized the humanitarian side of Christianity and stood bravely before the world, and oftentimes *against* the world, for those great Reforms of modern times that have been inaugurated for the purpose of removing some great existing evil and bettering in some specific way the condition of mankind. Its members have borne a faithful, unfaltering testimony against Intemperance, Chattel Slavery, Capital Punishment

and all forms of vindictive penalism, War and its correlatives, and other barbarous customs prevalent still in so-called civilized lands. Also against oath-taking, contentious litigation, and many social and political customs and practices which violate the Christian law of love to God and man. They illustrate among themselves in a large measure the idea of brotherhood, avoiding wrangling and vain dispute, caring scrupulously for their own poor and unfortunate, and relieving to the extent of their ability the suffering and distressed not only of their number but of the outside world. They have recognized and respected the inherent oneness of humanity, regardless of condition, color, sex, or nationality, holding with Paul that under a true ethical system "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus." They have maintained a consistent protest against union of church and state, against the compulsory support of religious institutions, against sectarian exclusiveness and vituperation, against all forms of religious obloquy, hatred, and persecution. They have much also in their church order and government that deserves respectful consideration, if not actual imitation and reproduction.

But while I note these excellences that characterize my Quaker friends, and am glad to pay them due honor therefor, there are some errors and defects in their church system which I feel in duty bound to expose and condemn ; for, as the seer of Patmos wrote of the church in Sardis, "I have not

found their works perfect before God." They disclaim creedism, and yet, in fact, have a creed, no less real, because unwritten, which, on occasion, they invest with authority and employ without question, in order to preserve the unity and integrity of their body and the purity and homogeneity of their fellowship. They have been much afraid of intellectualism and rationalism, as if there were some natural antagonism between reason and religion—between the powers of the understanding and the higher emotions of the human heart. For from this source has there come in their preaching and writing a large amount of vagueness and mysticism, which is not only an offense to clear-thinking minds but an obstacle to distinct and intelligent apprehension of important themes—of essential truth. Hence, sentimental platitudes and monotonous generalities with them not infrequently take the place of well-defined principles of virtue and piety, of simple, transparent statements of duty; thus confusing not only the mental but the spiritual sensibilities and generating a sort of superstitious placidity or emulsive goodyism which is a poor substitute for virile and sturdy piety and a poor equipment for a good soldier of Jesus Christ. There is a striking incongruity to my mind between the ethics and the theology of the Friends in this respect. In ethics they are, as a rule, definite, positive, clear, understandable. All their writings are of this character. They give no uncertain sound. But in theology they are obscure, nebulous, enigmatical, sometimes unintelligible. They incline

to give the Supreme Being a somewhat benignant and parental character as compared with the older orthodox theologians, but whether or not this character is intrinsic, vital, and inviolable, determining His thought, purpose, conduct, throughout all states and stages of existence, in eternity as well as in time, to unrepentant sinners no less than to saints, is more or less uncertain and problematical; as it is whether or not the ultimate of His moral government will be complete and universal victory on His part, a united, harmonious, holy, happy universe, all souls brought into subjection to Him, or a divided universe and so a partial failure; a portion of His human children redeemed from selfishness and sin and hence forever blest, while another portion, perhaps the larger, is doomed to never-ending misery and woe, their sighs and groans through all eternity mingling with "the songs, that warble from immortal tongues." So far as can be learned from their expositions and proclamations, they leave a large part of the human race in endless depravity and wretchedness or in impenetrable obscurity, from which no beneficent providence, no paternal love of God can ever rescue them.

Moreover, they generally, like the barbaric errorists, talk and write of this life as the only one in which either God or man can put away sin. When death transpires there is no more will or effort of God to discipline the wrong-doer and bring him to repentance, no further opportunity for amendment and entrance upon a new life, no possibility that then-existing evil can ever be overcome with good.

All is fixed and unchangeable. In this world God is interested in all souls and seeks to save all; He is kind to the unthankful and evil; He loves His enemies and commands us to imitate Him in these respects. But in the world to come all this is changed. Heaven and hell settle down in drawn battle to all eternity, and goodness, love, truth, in God and in His redeemed ones, have no further duty or desire to subdue their opposites and to bring in the reign of universal holiness and happiness. All this is to be inferred, partly from what is said and partly from what is not said by our esteemed fellow-Christians, the Friends, in their public utterances and denominational manifestos.

All this is irreconcilable with itself, with the ethical principles and duties enjoined in the same connection, and with the spirit and teachings of the Gospel of Christ. I can admit no such incongruities and barbarisms into a plan for the enlightenment, uplifting, harmonization, and perfecting of mankind with which my name is in any way identified.

Nor could I allow my contemplated regenerate church to incorporate in its constitutional provisions or administrative policy such ideas, doctrines, or opinions as the following, which the Friends more or less generally hold as important if not essential to denominational success, viz.: birthright membership in the church; the exclusion of music, pictures, and all symbolic devices from places and exercises of public worship; an unpaid ministry the only true and scriptural Christian ministry, all

remunerated preachers, teachers, etc., however reasonable and moderate their compensation, being denounced as "hirelings"; the magnifying into religious importance, even into a religious duty, a prescribed style of dress or form of speech in personal intercourse and the designation of times and seasons; the prohibition of the rite of baptism, of the eucharist, and other observances, though held as privileges and emblems helpful of a better life to those regarding them and not as binding sacraments—by no means as substitutes for personal virtue and piety; claims of reliability and authority for the Inner Light beyond what enlightened reason and a pure conscience will warrant; freedom from all restrictions or limitations in the accumulation and use of property on the part of individuals and corporations; participation in civil, sword-sustained governments in such ways and to such an extent as to involve the actual support of what is iniquitous in them and hostile to the spirit and principles of the Gospel; resort to courts of law for the collection of debts, redress of grievances, the apprehension and punishment of offenders in cases that involve a final authorized resort to physical violence;—all these things I hold to be errors, defects, or, at least, weaknesses, to be avoided and disallowed in the work of building and operating a Christian church on the original foundation and according to the original plan devised and commended to us by the Master himself and his co-laborers of the first century of our Christian era. On this ground I abjure and repudiate them.

And yet it is but just for me to say, that while the great majority of Friends are believed to have entertained the general views upon theological questions that I have ascribed to them, there have been, from near the beginning of their history, those who more or less openly abjured them and not only held but advocated more liberal, rational, and humane ones. As early as 1668, William Penn and George Whitehead, prominent exponents and defenders of the general denominational faith and polity, in a public discussion with a clergyman of the established English Church, maintained that the common doctrine of the tri-personality of God was not found in the Scriptures. And not long afterwards the former published a volume in which he claimed that the prevailing beliefs in regard to vicarious atonement and imputed righteousness through faith in Christ were wholly without scriptural or rational foundation. Though he lived ever after in good standing with his brethren and though it is probable there have been others from that day to this who sympathized with his views or entertained even more advanced ones, yet has there never been any break in the church on that account in the mother country.

On this side the water, however, this unity has not been preserved. The general atmosphere here has no doubt been favorable to liberal and progressive ideas and to that frank expression of opinion upon religious and other subjects which found illustration among the disciples of George Fox as well as among other Christian bodies. Under the

leadership of one Elias Hicks, a native of New York and a man of strong convictions and great force of character, who rose to prominence as a preacher and expounder of the Gospel, a movement was started about the year 1827, looking to a larger and more rational interpretation of Scripture and protesting against the more general and orthodox views of the denomination, which resulted a few years later in an open rupture between the radical and conservative members that has never been healed; each division going on in its own chosen way without contention or disputation sufficient to disturb the general harmony or arrest the attention of the outside world. The more rationalistic and reformatory of the seceders from the long-established order, drawn together by a common purpose to wage more earnest warfare with the great evils of society than their brethren deemed wise, formed an association some twenty or thirty years ago under the significant name of "Progressive Friends," whose annual meetings in Chester Co., Penn., were for a generation an interesting and instructive feature of the religious and reformatory history of the times. As a distinctive organization they have lost their former standing, if not wholly passed away; some of them resuming their previously existing ecclesiastical relations, while others have abandoned the special *ism* of the Friends altogether and distributed themselves among congenial Protestant sects "outside the meeting."

The record of the Friends on the whole, I may say in closing, has been a most honorable one,—

one which has imparted most valuable lessons to the church of the past two hundred and fifty years, with the sectarianism, dogmatism, denunciation, belligerency, indifference to or complicity with prevailing iniquities and barbarisms, which have characterized its different branches; and one from which scarcely less important lessons may be derived for the upbuilding of the church of the future and the bringing in of a new era to the world.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

CHRISTIANS, SWEDENBORGIANS, AND SHAKERS.

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will;” “what then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”—*Phil.* i. 15, 18.

I resume my examination of the smaller nominally Christian Denominations, introducing to my readers in the present Discourse several whose prominence in certain sections of our country or whose distinctive peculiarities entitle them to respectful consideration on my part, if not to my indiscriminate approval. I begin with a body numbering, it is claimed, several hundred thousand communicants, and more than a million adherents in the United States, who wish to be designated by the simple name first given the followers of Jesus at Antioch, viz. :—

CHRISTIANS.

This Denomination seems to have been distinctively American in its origin, having sprung from three different directions, East, West, and South in the early part of the present century; each

division being, at first, entirely independent, as it was ignorant, of the others; but, upon becoming acquainted and finding much in common between them, deciding, after a brief period of time, to consolidate and form one integral, organic religious communion. They adopted at the outset the distinctive name they bear; protesting against all others; declared the Bible to be their only rule of faith and practice, leaving each member to interpret it for himself; affirmed practical godliness to be the grand aim and test of fellowship; and avowed the largest liberality and toleration towards all who gave evidence of pursuing this aim and of standing this test, irrespective of doctrinal beliefs, of ritual observances, and of party affiliations. They generally reject the dogma of the Trinity and its cognates,—the Adamic Fall into total depravity, Vicarious Atonement, Election and Reprobation, and all kindred tenets, while holding to human sinfulness, the necessity of regeneration or birth into a higher life, the practical exemplification of the Christian virtues and graces, and a just retribution for all workers of iniquity in time or in eternity. They also hold to a divinely called ministry, to special seasons of religious revival, to baptism by immersion, causing them to be sometimes called Christian Baptists, to the observance of the Lord's Supper, and to most church usages common among Protestants. The majority of them, I think, believe in the second personal coming of Christ, the resurrection of the body, and one fixed day of judgment; some of them in endless punishment, some in the annihilation of

the incorrigibly wicked, and a few in the ultimate restoration of all souls to the favor of God and their attainment of the blessedness of heaven; though none of these doctrines are to be publicly professed and preached as of vital importance, or the acceptance of them to be regarded as a condition of church membership or of Christian fellowship. I began my religious and ministerial life in this denomination, but on becoming a so-called Restorationist was disowned and cast out solely on that ground, although such procedure was contrary to their profession of no-creedism and of a godly life as the only test of discipleship of Christ, showing that an unwritten creed may be as potent and quick as a written one to detect heresy and expel heretics. This transpired so long ago (1822), and my personal intercourse with this body since has been so limited that I cannot speak very positively of their present status, theologically or otherwise; but it is to be presumed that in common with most Evangelical sects they have drifted into larger liberty and a more tolerant spirit.

The Christians, notwithstanding their limitations and errors, are entitled to much respect and commendation for their personal piety and moral worth, having attained, in these respects, quite as high standing in the sight of God as some of the larger, more popular, and more self-satisfied sects which affect to despise and scorn them as weakly heretics. And so far as zeal for what they deem the cause of Christ and the salvation of souls is concerned, they will compare favorably with their

fellow-disciples of other communions. But their interest and concern seem to center largely in a future state of being, and in what is to be the destiny of mankind when they have shuffled off this mortal coil. The cause of Christ and the salvation of souls relate primarily and chiefly to that state and destiny; to deliverance from hell and the gaining of heaven in the world to come. And that religion, Christianity, has anything to do with human character here and now in this world, any farther than as a preparation or requisite for final acceptance with God and for eternal blessedness, seems never to enter their thought any more than it does the thought of other sects with which they are brought in contact if not in collision. They share the common lot of prevailing religious bodies, orthodox and heterodox alike, being afflicted with a sort of otherworldliness which indisposes or disqualifies them for the work of improving human conditions in this mortal state of existence, of regenerating society of which they form a part, of overthrowing the great evils that now afflict the children of men, and of building up a kingdom of heaven on the earth. They have never been known as reformers, and their testimony has never been heard in opposition to Mammonism, social injustice, political chicanery and corruption, oath-taking, vindictive punishment, war, etc., or in favor of a radical change of the social order, the rigid application of the principles and precepts of the Gospel to political life and the international relations of mankind, the Christianization of industry, property, etc., and

the fraternization of the race. Individuals among them have probably advanced to a state of personal and social excellence conformed in large degree to the New Testament ideal, but not the denomination as such, not the great majority of its members. An elect few among them may see the length and breadth, and height and depth of the Christian claim upon men, individually and socially, and desire earnestly to meet that claim, but the many, including the ruling forces of the body, are very well content with things as they are—content to occupy the plane of what may be called the world's better civilization, with its manifold inequalities and abuses, in common with other and more popular nominal Christian denominations. Like them, these "Christians" need to be born again before they can see the true kingdom of God. If what they have attained, which is scarcely distinguishable from what characterizes respectable unregenerate worldlings, is the best and the most that Christianity can do for mankind, then, as a religion of redemption, it is a deplorable failure; a conclusion which I can never accept or tolerate without abandoning the positions which my reason and conscience have compelled me to assume, and my faith in the Gospel of Christ as the power of God into the salvation of the world.

THE SWEDENBORGIANS.

The Swedenborgian, or "New Jerusalem Church," as its members prefer to have it called, consists exclusively of persons who believe in the extraordi-

nary divine illumination and voluminous teachings of Emanuel Swedenbörg, a most wonderful Spiritual seer, who, for some twenty-five or more years, claimed to be in special and orderly communication with Christ and the inhabitants of the unseen world, whereby he was enabled to expound to mankind the essential truth of the Divine Word hidden in the letter of Holy Scripture. This singularly gifted man was born in Stockholm, Sweden, January 29, 1688, and died in London, England, March 29, 1772. He was the subject of deep religious impressions from his childhood, and early in life evinced remarkable mental acumen and great fondness for study. He received the best education to be obtained in his day, and when 21 years of age was honored with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Upsal. He soon became proficient in mathematics, mechanics, and the natural sciences, as well as in questions of philosophy, publishing works upon these several subjects which established his reputation as one of the most profound students of his time.

But it was not in the directions indicated that Swedenborg gained greatest distinction, or rendered himself most worthy of the esteem, veneration, and gratitude of mankind. When he was 57 years of age, in the full maturity of his powers and at the height of his fame, "he was called," as he puts it, "to a new and holy office by the Lord himself, who manifested himself to him in person, and opened his sight to a view of the spiritual world, and granted him the privilege of conversing with

spirits and angels." That office was, as before intimated, to make known the internal spiritual meaning of the sacred Scriptures, and to the duties of that office he thereafter devoted himself with unfaltering diligence, conscientiousness, and zeal, under the special guidance and inspiration, as he believed and claimed, of his Master and Lord. His views were given to the world in a considerable number of volumes, the contents of which were condensed and summarized in his last work published at Amsterdam the year before his death, under the title of "The True Christian Religion, containing the Universal Theology of the New Church," etc.

During the life-time of this Swedish Seer the number of those who received his doctrine was exceedingly small, and it does not appear that he made any attempt to establish any organic ecclesiastical relations between them. But certain of them united in the formation of a church not long after his decease, and thus started a movement which has filled its place and done its work in the religious world in an honorable and praiseworthy manner to this day. Its growth has been slow, owing to the character of the doctrines it represents, and the number of persons professing those doctrines is still comparatively small. It is greatest in England and the United States, though there are earnest and zealous New Churchmen to be found in France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and indeed in nearly every part of the Christian world.

Before proceeding to the criticism that I feel constrained to make upon the Swedenborgian Church, I am moved to offer a few commendatory observations, derived from much careful reading and a limited personal acquaintance. The members of that church I regard as an eminently intellectual, conscientious, high-minded, refined class of people, justly entitled to the respect, confidence, and admiration of their fellow-religionists and the general public, for all those personal, social, moral, and spiritual qualities that characterize and honor the highest and best ranks of the older and more massive sects. In their private lives, in their domestic relations, in civic affairs, in all that goes to make good citizens, in all that adorns and ennobles human character or illustrates Christian morality and piety on the common plane of existing civilization, they are signally exemplary and worthy; not excelled, I honestly believe, by any denomination or religious party taken as a whole in Christendom. In these respects and on this common ground I assign them not simply to an eminent, but to a pre-eminent place. It is a delight to know such people and to hold fellowship with them.

And again, in regard to the general ideas, principles, doctrines, requirements of the Swedenborgians, and their religious literature, I am free to say that no person of intelligence can become familiar therewith without being benefited and blest. The writings of Swedenborg, and indeed of his adherents generally, cannot be read with an open, receptive mind but with great moral and spiritual profit.

They are charged to the full with instruction, with encouragement, with inspiration. They contain so much of truth and good, love and wisdom, profound thought and clear discernment of divine things, that I can cordially accept and embrace a very large part of what I find in them. But this will not make me a passable New Churchman, even in my own estimation; much less in the estimation of the guardians of the denomination. The fundamental defect with me is that I cannot believe in the plenary divine illumination and entirely reliable spiritual seership of Swedenborg. If I could, there would be an end to all doubt and dissent on my part, and so an end to my system and to all my dreams of a coming regenerate Christian church. I should consider the New Jerusalem Church the *ne plus ultra* of religious aspiration and attainment, and hasten into its membership. Convinced as I am that the Swedish seer was an eminent revealer of divine truth and of the secrets of the inner spheres of being, as well as a truly great and worthy man, I am far from being convinced that he was an infallible teacher and guide, or that he was so completely subject to the powers of the world to come as to be above all psychological illusion, self-deception, or mistake. In fact, I suspect him very strongly of theological bias resulting from education and habit of thought, and of a liability by reason of internal conditions of misapprehending the source of his revelations, counting them *objective* when they were *subjective*. Influenced by such doubts and questionings, I must act the

part of critic and eclectic in respect to some of the most important of his declarations and hypotheses.

In the definitely formulated creed of twelve articles derived from the disquisitions of Swedenborg, which constitute the organic basis and professed faith of the New Jerusalem Church, there are several particulars from which I beg leave to express my most emphatic and unhesitating dissent, as follows:

1. I dissent from that part of the first article of the creed of Swedenborgians which affirms that Jehovah God, as the Divine Being is named, "is One both in Essence and in Person, in whom nevertheless is the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which are the Essential Divinity, the Divine Humanity, and the Divine Proceeding, answering to the soul, the body, and the operative energy in men; and that the Lord Jesus Christ is that God." In this affirmation I see not only inexplicable mystery but scholastic mystification of a most objectionable nature, with the incredible assumption that Jesus Christ is what all his recorded asseverations positively contradict. Why must that unscriptural and misleading term, Trinity, be brought in? If we have the Essential Divinity of one God, have we not His whole? What is this so-called Divine Humanity in God? Is it something different from the Essential Divinity? Is it anything but a scholastic invention? And the Divine Proceeding, what is that but the Essential Divinity in motion, actuating and inspiring dependent beings capacitated for such experiences? Is it something

separate from the omnipresent God that goes and comes without reference to Him? I object to such mystical, unscriptural, irrational distinctions which confuse and distract rather than inform and illumine the ingenuous mind. My God must be an infinite, all-perfect Spirit, filling all space and duration, and with whom there can be no up or down, above or below, here or there; no coming or going, except in some metaphorical or spiritual sense easily comprehensible by intelligent, self-conscious, divinely endowed natures. And still more do I object to the declaration that Jesus Christ is the one only and absolute God, contrary to the whole tenor of the Gospel testimonies. That the Infinite Jehovah ever reduced himself to the organism of a human being, yea, of an embryonic infant in the order of human generation, is a notion too senseless, too absurd, too preposterous for me to entertain for a moment: I cannot abide it.

2. I dissent *in toto* from the declaration that "Jehovah God himself descended from heaven, as Divine Truth which is the Word, and took upon him Human Nature." Does this imply that the Infinite One was one whit the less in heaven or the more on earth than before and always? If so, I believe it not. And the capacity in which he descended, "as Divine Truth, which is the Word," does this mean anything more or less than that He imparted to His chosen one, Jesus of Nazareth, a large measure of that Spirit of Wisdom which in less degree is given as a divine light "to every man that cometh unto the world?" If so, why

not plainly state it in that way, so that any intelligent person can understand it? Again: "That by the same acts, which were his temptations, the last of which was the passion of the cross, he united in his Humanity Divine Truth to Divine Good, or Divine Wisdom to Divine Love, and so returned into his Divinity in which he was from eternity, together with, and in his Glorified Humanity." What a perplexing, incomprehensible, needless puzzle is this! What HE is this that returned into his Divinity? "Jehovah God himself." Did he then vacate his Divinity for the time being? "He united in his Humanity Divine Truth to Divine Good, or Divine Wisdom to Divine Love." Indeed! Where were they before? Were they not in him, the very essence of his being, always and forevermore? What possible change did they undergo, in his Humanity or out of it? None whatever as I can see. These words and phrases are to me but carefully studied enigmas, obscuring the mental vision and beclouding the subject to which they relate. Compare them with the simple, easily understood Scripture representation of the Christhood of Jesus, or with my own clearly-expressed statements upon the same important themes.

3. "That the sacred Scripture, or Word of God is Divine Truth itself containing a spiritual sense heretofore unknown, whence it is divinely inspired and holy in every syllable," etc. I have never seen any evidence of the truth of this statement and hence decline to accept it. To me it is nothing

but assertion with no basis in fact or in reason. It is a view of the Scriptures so arbitrary, artificial, complex, mystical, that I instinctively reject it. To my best understanding the verbalism and phraseology of the sacred writings are naturally and necessarily *human*; while their essential truths, ideas, principles, and spirit, claiming to be inspired of God, I regard as *divine*; to be cherished, revered, and exemplified accordingly. As to unlocking the mysteries they contain with Swedenborg's key of correspondences, under the notion that every syllable is holy and has a hidden divine meaning in it, I have no faith or reverence prompting me to the task. The whole idea to my mind is fanciful, fictitious, misleading, and without warrant of any sort.

4. I do not hold with the Swedenborgian brethren "that man at this day is born into evil of all kinds or with tendencies to it" in the bald, unqualified sense which the language of their creed implies. The doctrine as stated savors too much of the medieval dogma of total depravity, which I have elsewhere declared to be abhorrent to the better instincts of the human heart and libellous towards God, the Father of all mankind. Man's essential nature is good and only good, but liable to perversion and abuse, and subject, more or less, to demoralizing influences from within and without, as it is to elevating and redeeming ones; the latter being the mightier of the two and in the end the all-prevailing ones. Nor do I believe in the New Church affirmation of the *Equilibrium* between

good and evil as the basis of man's moral freedom; or between heaven and hell as necessary to the existence of the divine moral order of the world and universe. Nor can I accept the idea that the Second Advent of the Lord, or the descent of the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven, was co-incident with, if not realized in, the spiritual seership of Swedenborg and the founding of the church bearing his name. And I cannot allow the claims that are made for the permanent obligatoriness and sacramental efficacy of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs and the prosecution of the work of Christ in the world. Nor, perhaps, could I approve and sanction certain other but less important doctrines peculiar to the class of professing Christians under consideration.

5. Finally, I object to and utterly repudiate the Swedenborgian dictum of the eternity of the hells; that is, of endless, voluntary sinfulness and misery, of the everlasting continuance of evil, however modified or accommodated to refined and sensitive natures of the present day. On this matter I have expressed my well-settled convictions with sufficient fullness, lucidity, and emphasis in the first volume of this series, and will not go over the already covered ground again.

Having thus presented and discussed the chief points of contention with my New Church brethren, I might, were it needful to the execution of my present design, turn the tables and enumerate a few of the many particulars of the Swedenborgian

theology, morality, eschatology, and ecclesiastical polity, which I heartily admire, accord with, and enjoy. I cheerfully acknowledge that I have perused the works of their great leader and prophet with profound interest and lasting benefit, and my intercourse with some of his most cultured, able, and honored disciples and expositors, has been to me a source of never-to-be-forgotten edification, satisfaction, and delight. Nevertheless, this people, as a rule, excellent in so many respects as they are, seem to be quite content with the existing social order under which exists a vast amount of selfishness, injustice, brutality, legalized murder, penury, want, and woe, never dreaming that Christianity requires them to abjure all these things and renounce a system which nourishes and perpetuates them, and never contemplating or attempting a movement which should effect a radical transformation and bring a better era in—the reign in all human affairs of righteousness, equity, brotherhood, and peace—the promised kingdom of God. Exemplary and worthy as they are, they yet as a body do not illustrate the ideal Christian character; they have not attained to what constitutes the requisites of a model Christian church. For this reason, as well as for others already indicated, I cannot regard the Swedenborgian church otherwise than provisional and temporary, preparing the way with others it may be for that church of the future which in some coming day will, I have no doubt, be built, and whose building will be the redemption of the world.

THE SHAKERS.

Of this singular sect or class of professing Christians I am impelled by a sense of justice as well as by feelings of respect to say a few things though not all that I could wish, did space permit. It is characterized by many peculiarities which I can only hint at but not fully describe. It is of comparatively modern origin, having arisen in and around Manchester, England, about the year 1770. It was to begin with an offshoot from the Society of Friends or Quakers, and, by reason of certain features in their mode of worship, its adherents have been often called Shaking Quakers, though the name they prefer is that of "United Believers in Christ." They retain many of the scruples of the parent body, especially with reference to oath-taking, slavery, war, etc., though differing considerably therefrom in other respects. The founders of the denomination were Jane and James Wardley, though that honor is generally ascribed to one Ann Lee, a woman of much natural ability and of strange experiences and manifestations, which she claimed were of spiritual origin and qualified her for a religious teacher, preacher, and guide. She exercised a wonderful power over a certain class of people and gained a considerable following in a brief space of time. Her speech and conduct and those of her adherents aroused much opposition, even unto persecution, and they migrated in a body from their native land to the United States in 1774, locating at Watervliet, near Albany, N. Y., which has been the headquarters of the brotherhood on

these shores ever since. They increased in numbers considerably for a time and founded settlements or villages in several of the northern states of the Union. They are celibate Communists in both theory and practice, and their most striking peculiarity is their unitary mode of life — men, women, and children dwelling together in their respective localities as one great family, though without those conjugal and parental ties that characterize ordinary family life.

This peculiar people are professed anti-creedists, yet they have very definite and pronounced religious beliefs, which may be summarized in a single paragraph. They acknowledge the existence of one God, who is not Triune but Dual in nature and manifestation, possessing both male and female qualities which render Him alike Father and Mother of mankind. They ascribe to Deity attributes of the highest benevolence, wisdom, and power, under the impulse of which He guides and governs all things. They are avowed Spiritualists, and claim to have had from the beginning more or less reliable manifestations and revelations from the unseen realm of being. They hold that Jesus Christ and Ann Lee, their reputed founder, were both pre-eminently filled with the Spirit of God, and were thereby enabled to make known the Divine Perfections and Will — the former representing the paternal elements of the Infinite One, the latter, the maternal, giving her the familiar name of Mother Ann Lee. They understand the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection to be a moral and spiritual

rising out of the death of trespasses and sins, practically identical with true Regeneration. This introduces its subjects into the kingdom of God, whether experienced on earth or in the spirit world. In that kingdom they maintain there is no marriage or sexual relationship, and no separate and selfish personal interests, but all members are co-equal and all possessions are common and held for the common and universal good. Hence their distinctive form of domestic and social life. But this mode of life, which is at once the fruit and proof of regeneration, must be wholly voluntary; not entered upon nor continued by constraint, over-persuasion, or any considerations of a worldly or self-seeking nature. In the regenerate state all oath-taking, vindictive punishment, resort to brute force, war, and participation in worldly governments, are transcended and forever disallowed. Consequently they dwell together in communities or villages exclusively their own, which, though subject to "the powers that be" within whose jurisdiction they exist, constitute a unitary, self-dependent, and self-governing theocracy; a miniature kingdom of God on earth. As such they provide for themselves all the necessities and comforts that conduce to human welfare, material and spiritual, industrial, intellectual, moral, social, and religious, in the attainment of which they have been pre-eminently successful. In personal character they are above reproach; as citizens of the commonwealth of mankind they are worthy of scrupulous emulation. They hold to the immortality of the soul, to progress in the future

life, though, if I am rightly informed, there will be a remnant of finally impenitent, who, refusing all offers of grace, will continue in sin and be kept in durance vile therefor forever and ever.

What now shall I say of the Shakers, or, as they prefer to be designated, the "United Society of Believers"? I am free and happy to admit that as a body they have great merits; that certain of their doctrines and principles are unquestionably Christlike; and that some of their domestic and social arrangements are worthy of earnest consideration if not of adoption. The truth and good embodied in their system of faith and life put to shame in some respects most of the popular denominations in Christendom. And yet, as now persuaded, I must eschew and repudiate many of their sectarian tenets and other peculiarities. It seems to me purely imaginative and fanciful to regard the Supreme Being as Dual after their fashion—male and female. I prefer to contemplate Him as one and indivisible, the omnipresent Spirit, transcending all human distinctions and relationships, and yet representing unto perfection all possible mental and moral excellences of manhood and womanhood combined. The name "Father" is to me quite as expressive of the All-perfect as the duplex one "Father and Mother," and much less confusing. The use of the latter is in my view an uncouth fancy, which I cannot endorse, or hardly respect.

Again, I have no evidence that Ann Lee, familiarly called "Mother Ann," was in any proper sense

the counterpart of Jesus Christ, 'raised up and empowered like him to bring the truth and grace of God to a needy world. I am, moreover, altogether sure that the resurrection taught in the New Testament is primarily the transition of man's personal entity from the present world of flesh and sense to a world of unseen spiritual verities, and that the use of the word to represent the rising out of a life of selfishness and sin into one of holiness and love, making it the equivalent of regeneration, is figurative and typical rather than literal.

There is in my judgment a holy chastity of celibacy, the practice of which is allowable and even commendable for persons inclined thereto under circumstances of given peculiarity. And there is also, I believe, an equally holy chastity of connubiality, which makes orderly marriage, resulting in home life and the procreation and rearing of offspring, a component part of the divine order and a sacrament unto God. Neither celibacy nor marriage, however, can in itself be regarded as a fruit or test of that renewed life which is the end and aim of the Gospel of Christ. So of the matter of holding and using property. It is to my mind proper, right and desirable for some people of advanced Christlikeness, if so disposed, to make of their material possessions a common stock, collection, or repository, as the Shakers do, drawing therefrom for the common supply of the needs of life, and to dwell together in close communal relations during mutual convenience and satisfaction. But I do not deem it wise, best, or desirable for

all Christians to follow that course or attempt to follow it. There is, I am confident, a natural, just, innocent right of private ownership of property, which never should be ignored, denied, taken away, or voluntarily relinquished, even by those who from conscientious motives enter the closest fraternal or communal relationships. This right should be maintained and held inviolate, not alone for justifiable personal reasons but as a safeguard against the usurpations and tyrannous exactions of irresponsible and unscrupulous power, when exercised towards the weak, dependent, less resolute, and self-assertive classes of mankind. When properly appreciated and cherished this right conduces to personal independence, self-respect, freedom from corroding care, and many of the higher attributes of human character and nobler purposes of human life. The same may be said of personal rights in other respects—in a general sense. They are never, under any pretext whatsoever, to be put out of sight, to be disregarded, to be trampled under foot, to be ignominiously abandoned or sacrificed. I am a Christian Socialist of a pronounced type, but never to the annihilation of the God-derived personality of any man, women, or child; never to the absorption of the individual in the common mass; nor to the obliteration of that sense of responsibility in the human breast which holds each soul and the whole universe of souls in unshaken loyalty to the eternal law of righteousness and to Him whose right it is to rule, God over all, blessed forevermore. The conclusion of this

whole matter concerning the Shaker brotherhood is that with all the truth and good, in faith and practice, individually and socially, it embodies and exemplifies, it is not the model Church of Christ, the universal extension and actualization of which upon the earth would be the promised coming of the divine kingdom and the redemption of the race. Its excellences are to be recognized, honored, and garnered as the foretokens of the final grand consummation ; while its weaknesses, imperfections, and defects are to be disowned, rejected, overcome, transcended ; as I have no doubt that, in the overruling providence of the good God, they some day will be.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

UNIVERSALIST AND UNITARIAN DENOMINATIONS: CONCLUSION.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”—*Rev.* xxi. 1, 5.

THE UNIVERSALISTS.

The distinguishing characteristic of this denomination of professing Christians is a belief in the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of the whole family of mankind. Some of its members (though few in these later days) hold that all punishment for sin is limited to the present state of existence, while others, the large majority, maintain that it extends into the future life, and is of indefinite and varying duration there; but all agree that it is administered whether here or there in the spirit of kindness, is intended and calculated to promote the ultimate good of those who experience it, and will sooner or later terminate in and be succeeded by a condition of perfect and endless purity, harmony, and bliss. Their theological position in the religious world was definitely formulated at a General Convention of delegates from the churches of the body

in the United States, held at Winchester, N. H., in 1803, and published under the name and in the form following, to wit:—

PROFESSION OF BELIEF.

“ART. 1. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.

“ART. 2. We believe that there is one God whose nature is love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

“ART. 3. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.”

[In justice to those particularly concerned it should be stated that while the above-given “Winchester Confession,” as it is sometimes called, may be considered as representing the consensus of theological opinion in the Universalist Church, it is not regarded as a creed in the strict sense of the term, nor as of absolute binding obligation upon each and every individual member; nor is the acceptance of it made a test of Christian character or the condition of denominational fellowship. The basis of fellowship, as established by the General Convention which met in Boston, A. D. 1899, is: “I. The acceptance of the essential principles of the Universalist Faith, to wit: (1) The Universal Fatherhood of God; (2) The spiritual authority and leadership of his Son, Jesus Christ; (3) The trustworthiness of the Bible as containing a revelation from God; (4) The certainty of

just retribution for sin; (5) The final harmony of all souls with God. And II. The acknowledgment of the authority of the General Convention and assent to its laws."—ED.]

REMARKS.

I. A belief in the final holiness and happiness of all men has been held in some form by individuals and by prominent schools of Christian thought from the earliest ages of the church; but it was never made the basis of a distinctive denomination until about a century ago. Persons holding the doctrine in this country then began to organize, thus establishing a nucleus around and from which has grown up the present considerable and worthy sect of Universalists. Their nominal creed, as before quoted, has not been changed, [although assigned a new place in their system, as indicated,—ED.] and like their name is of such indefinite and comprehensive nature as to have proved admirably adapted to their convenience and success. If they were Trinitarians, Sabellians, or Unitarians, as all of these classes have had representatives in their ranks, their creed was equally satisfactory. If they were of Calvinistic, Arminian, or Pelagian proclivities in certain directions, there was no pinch or friction. If they held to much, little, or no future retribution, there was room for all shades of opinion on that point. And so if some were extremely pietistic, and others only moralistic, and still others only theologically sympathetic, the same freedom prevailed. The one distinctive, central, grand doctrine, salvation for all men

under a government of a God whose name and whose nature is love, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, "who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time," by the operation of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed "to every man to profit withal" — this doctrine was made conclusively definite and paramount, overshadowing all lesser questions, harmonizing all differences, and securing a *nominal* union at least of all who bore the name of Universalist.

2. The great mission of the Universalist denomination seems to have been to make an effectual protest against the abominable doctrine of "Endless Punishment" and its brood of kindred errors. These had been so rooted, confirmed, and dominant in the nominal Christian church from the fifth century onward as to be incurable by individual effort, or by considerable bodies of dissenters operating inside the long-prevailing ecclesiasticism of Christendom. A compact, strong, self-dependent, courageous body of protesters, well organized on the basis of final Universal Salvation and well-equipped for permanent service, was needed, in order to arrest public attention, compel intelligent and thorough investigation of the subject involved, expose the falsity and enormity of the dogma in question and its allied fallacies, and compel the gradual expulsion of the whole impious and hateful throng from the doctrinal formularies and acknowledged religious beliefs of the civilized world. Much has been done, not by the Universalists alone, though they have been the leading human agency in the work, but by a varied

instrumentality, toward the accomplishment of the end in view. The final result, however, is still in the future; yet will it surely be achieved and at no far-off day. The drift of theological ideas, the growing intelligence, virtue, and piety of all branches of the church, and the good Providence of the good God unite to make assurance upon this matter doubly sure.

3. In order to the accomplishment of their denominational mission, it was not necessary that the Universalists, either in their leaders or as a body, should be a more reverent or zealous people than the members of the older sects, and it is not claimed that they were; but it *was* necessary that their common, substantial morality should average as high in the common relations of life and in civil society; and this in a large measure has been the case. It was not necessary that they should possess more of the learning of the school and university; more of what may be called culture, erudition, literary taste and accomplishment, etc., than their partialistic opponents. For many years, it is probable, they did not have as much. But it *was* necessary that they should have as much natural ability, good common sense, practical judgment, power of reasoning, mental vigor and acumen. And in these qualities they have not been wanting—they have more than averaged with their religious contemporaries of any and every class or party. Had they not possessed a stern, uncompromising, commanding moral sense—the central element of character—and a correspondingly clear apprehension of the supreme claims of eternal moral

principles—justice, mercy, benovolence, etc., they would never have had an instinctive abhorrence of the doctrine of endless punishment and its kindred notions as intolerably cruel and pitiless, and as derogatory to the divine perfections ; nor would they have ever made any bold, vigorous, persistent protest against it ; but would have tamely acquiesced in the popular opinion concerning it. And if they had not been favored by nature and Providence with strong minds, good judgment, and superior reasoning faculties, they could never have maintained their position against their antagonists, among whom were men of the greatest intellectual and polemic ability in the civilized world. As it was, and as they were, they, in a very homely and inelegant, sometimes in an ungracious and seemingly coarse manner, assailed the offensive and monstrous doctrine in question without fear or favor, and exposed its fallacy and atrocity, without equivocation or apology. That there was no such God as the doctrine implied they knew beyond all controversy, no such divine government of the world, no such horrible, unending, worse than useless doom for any of the children of the infinite Father of all mankind. There was no reason, no justice, as there was certainly no mercy, in such alleged retribution for sin. Moreover, the Bible, which they could quote as readily as their opponents, like reason and common sense, taught that God was perfect in goodness, wisdom, and power ; that He would have all men to be saved ; that He sent His Son into the world to save the whole world and not a part of it ; that Christ should reign mediatorially

“till he hath put all enemies under his feet ;” and then, when victory was complete, should himself become subject to the Father, that He might “be all in all.” It taught that men should be judged at the divine bar according to their deeds ; that while the good would be rewarded for their virtues the bad would also be punished for their iniquities ; not vindictively, not to an infinite degree, not in a way or to an extent calculated to confirm them in sin and rebellion forever, but in a way that should sooner or later subdue them, work out their reformation, and make them partakers of the divine holiness and bliss. The threatenings of God could not in the end prevail against the promises of God. It did not require great learning or polished culture to fire volleys of this sort, drawn from such a magazine, into the ranks of the enemy. Plain, common sense men and women could do it ; much more strong-minded, sagacious, abundantly-equipped Universalist doctrinaires and controversialists. And no D. D.s or lay dialecticians of any school could successfully resist the attack ; could answer the argument. They could quote Scripture threatenings, passing by its larger promises ; they could denounce the stout-hearted disbelievers in an endless hell as heretics, deluded by the devil and bound for eternal perdition ; all of which made no more impression upon the sort of mind they had to deal with than baying at the moon, and accomplished as little for the cause it was designed to bulwark and defend. They were in a bad plight. The mode of warfare they employed reacted upon themselves. The charges of the assailants were not met. Con-

sequently the old error gradually gave way. The new and larger faith grew continually though slowly, permeating the more conservative and traditionary churches, until at length it gained the respect of all fairminded people, and, to a considerable extent has modified, if it does not dominate, the belief of the church universal; showing that the day of its triumph is dawning and will ere long burst in glory upon the world.

4. The Universalists, to begin with, were of three different classes of people; different but not antagonistic. (1) There were a few profoundly and truly religious persons—benevolent, conscientious, devout—to whom any idea or doctrine derogatory to the character of the heavenly Father and ascribing to Him a course of conduct towards sinners inherently useless and merciless was utterly abhorrent and unendurable. (2) A still larger class was composed of persons whose reason and common sense revolted instinctively from a view of God and the moral government of the world which was absurd and preposterous in itself and evidently born of ignorance, superstition, and barbarism. (3) Another class was made up of such persons as usually hang upon the skirts of any new movement that seems to promise them immunity from irksome restrictions, larger liberty of thought and conduct, and more personal ease, comfort, and enjoyment. At present the first class is increasing, the second improving, the third slowly vanishing; a hopeful condition of things for the denomination, for pure and undefiled religion, and for humanity.

This being so, it might be asked why the Universalist Church is not about well enough in itself and in its promise for the future. In other words, why is it deemed necessary to announce a different standard of faith or to labor for a higher, more perfect form of religious ecclesiasticism than it represents—for a more Christlike church. For several reasons. In the first place, the Creed or Profession of Belief adopted as the basis of the Universalist denomination is too vague and indefinite in my judgment as a declaration of principles or as a form of administration for the effectual prosecution of the work in hand. It does not in the first article clearly state on what ground, in what way, and to what extent, the Scriptures are a revelation of the character of God and a disclosure of the duty and destiny of mankind. The same indefiniteness exists in regard to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, punishment, salvation, and other vital points of Christian truth. In the next place the Universalist Church does not sufficiently magnify and set forth the claims of the divine law of righteousness, nor proclaim and urge upon the hearts and consciences of men the great duties that appertain to the life of the individual, and especially to social order and progress. And again, it does not propose or set up any higher or more Christlike standard of personal, domestic, social, or civic virtue or excellence than that which is represented in so-called civilization, whose potency and final appeal center in statute law, in vindictive punishment, and in the supremacy of injurious

force and violence in the last resort. It vies with the Calvinistic, Arminian, and other classes of professing Christians, in subordinating Christianity to worldly governmentalism in its practical application to human affairs. It seeks to build up no kingdom of God on earth distinct from and superior to the existing social and political order. So that were all men converted to Universalism, *as it now is*, the world would go on very much as it now does. This is a test that I am compelled to apply to every religious body whose claims are presented to me for examination and judgment. Applied to the Universalist Church it is found wanting, and I therefore look for a truer, higher, more Christlike one, yet to be established on the earth.

THE UNITARIANS.

In considering and passing judgment upon the denomination bearing the distinctive name of Unitarian, I propose to regard it chiefly as it now exists in the United States, and as it is represented in that general comprehensive organization known as the "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches," though the qualifying words "and other Christian" are virtually a misnomer. The particular doctrine from which its name is derived, that of the Unity of God as opposed to that of the Trinity, appeared very early in the history of the church, and although regarded by the dominant ecclesiasticism as a heresy, has had a place among religious controversialists and philosophers and in religious literature through all

the succeeding generations. Cherished at first as a mere speculation or private opinion by individual thinkers of more or less prominence in ecclesiastical affairs, it ere long took the name of Sabellianism and later of Arianism, under both of which titles it was put under the ban of both church and state. In the time of the so-called Reformation, it was one of the most pronounced forms of opinion that claimed the attention of the religious public, one Faustus Socinus, an Italian theologian, being its leading advocate and promulgator ; whence its more modern name in European polemics, Socinianism. Through the influence of Socinus and others, Unitarian churches were established in Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, etc., and the long-ostracized faith became an important factor in the development of a rational and progressive Christianity on the continent. Unitarianism sprang up in England soon after the breaking away of the national church from Romanism, and has maintained a respectable and influential though a subordinate position among the dissenting sects of the kingdom unto this day.

While the distinguishing and central doctrine of the Unitarian body from the beginning has been and is, as stated, that of the Divine Unity as opposed to the Trinity, yet have there been associated with it certain other doctrines scarcely less important as component parts of a distinct system or school of theologic thought. Among these are the strict humanity of Christ, the impersonality of the Holy Spirit, the dignity and worth of human

nature as opposed to its total depravity, the Fatherhood of God, the sonship and brotherhood of man, atonement for sin, not by vicarious sacrifice and a substituted righteousness, but by moral transformation and growth into the divine likeness, the reformatory nature and design of punishment, and in these later years universal progress and the ultimate redemption of all mankind.

Unitarianism in this country as I am disposed to treat it, is, in a general way, set forth in the Constitution of the National Conference before referred to, especially in the Preamble and in the Ninth Article, both of which I quote in full. "Whereas the great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration at this time increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith by self-denial and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God and the upbuilding of the kingdom of His Son," etc. "Re-affirming our allegiance to the gospel of Jesus Christ and desiring to secure the largest unity of the spirit and the widest practical co-operation, we invite to our fellowship all who wish to be followers of Christ."

[It is proper to state that the Unitarians, like the Universalists, have modified this, their former basis of organization and fellowship, for the purpose of securing a more complete unity and a larger liberty for those of common sympathies and aims who are alike devoted to the cause of pure and undefiled religion and to the work of establishing

the kingdom of God on the earth. Their present manifesto passed unanimously by the National Conference, Sept. 26, 1894, reads as follows:—"The Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches was formed in the year 1865 with the purpose of strengthening the churches and societies which should unite in it for more and better work for the kingdom of God. These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding in accordance with his teaching that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man." — ED.]

The Unitarian denomination, as may be judged from the above, is decidedly opposed to creeds or definite statements of theological belief, to be formally accepted by those who enter its membership, but it has always maintained that it was loyally and distinctively Christian. In church government its adherents and confessors are extreme Congregationalists, jealous of everything that savors of infringement upon personal liberty of thought and the right of private judgment in matters of faith and practice. They incline therefore, as a body, to a strict and ultra individualism, are inveterately averse to every kind of ecclesiastical domination and conventionalism, and deny all assumptions of authority on the part of Councils, Synods, Presbyteries, etc.; their own conferences and the decretals issued thereby being invested with only advisory power. As a natural result of this radical individualism, some of those formerly in fellowship with them have gone quite outside of the Christian confession into what is vaguely termed "Free Religion,"

and a few others still further, into Agnosticism or utter unbelief in religion of any kind or name.

On the negative side of theology all Unitarians agree in repudiating the medieval doctrines of the Trinity, the Fall in Adam, Total Depravity, Election and Reprobation, Vicarious Atonement, and Endless Punishment. On the positive side no such unanimity exists, but contrariwise a wide and heterogeneous diversity. In regard to the nature, rank, and mission of Jesus Christ, opinion among them ranges from high Arianism, scarcely distinguishable from moderate Trinitarianism, to that simple humanitarianism which makes him only a remarkably spiritually endowed and developed man; chosen, commissioned, qualified for the work of human salvation, in no different sense from what the rest of mankind are. So of their views of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Some deem them divinely inspired to a very large extent, though not plenarily so, while others ascribe to them no inspiration at all, save what characterizes the writings of all good men in all ages of the world. And between these two extremes there are almost innumerable grades of opinion among them. Agreeing in the general idea of the dignity and worth of human nature, yet their notions of its actual moral state, of its imperfection, perversity, culpability, wickedness, and guilt, are greatly diversified. Something of the same variety of thought prevails among them in respect to the freedom of the will, regeneration, the agency of the Holy Spirit, moral accountability, and even of human duty in the

multiform relations of life. Nor is there unanimity of conviction concerning the final destiny of mankind. While probably none of them hold to the dogma of never-ending torture as a punishment for the sinner, yet no doubt some do hold to the idea of the never-ending consequences of sin — of the everlasting putting backward of the soul in its progress Godward as a result of persistent wrong-doing. Others confessedly believe in annihilation as the end to which the incorrigibly wicked at length come, the non-use or abuse of the higher and otherwise undying powers of human nature causing their ultimate extinction. It is to be inferred, moreover, that there are those nominally in the Unitarian fold who doubt, if they do not openly deny, the doctrine of immortality altogether, surmising if not believing that "death ends all." But there is unquestionably a large class of them, presumably the great majority, who agree with their Universalist brethren in the ultimate holiness and happiness of the entire human race — of all the children of the infinite Father.

From all this it will be seen that the Unitarians could not if they would, and would not if they could, adopt any such definitive creed as those of the dominant sects, or even as the one I propose. Yet they have their own peculiar mission as a denomination, as the Universalists have. That mission seems to be two-fold — to expose and explode the gross corruptions of the church at large in regard to the Trinity and correlative errors of the so-called Evangelical theology; and to rescue individual freedom of investigation, opinion, and expression, from

the thralldom to which the old-creedists have so long subjected it. Such is their distinguishing work, and they have done and are doing it thoroughly and well. They serve other important ends, but mostly in common with other sects. In the particulars named, the service is peculiarly their own and differentiates them from all other laborers in the field. And yet this work is preparative not perfective; it is provisional and not final. Something more definite as respects fundamental truth, more thorough in regard to required duty, more constructive in the way of building up a new church according to the primitive pattern and a new civilization on a pure Christian basis, is needed, and must, in the perfect order of a perfect providence of a perfect God, inevitably follow. This is what I believe, hope for, and would, if possible, promote.

The Unitarians as a body, both constitutionally and historically, are of a different type of mind and of saintship from the Universalists, though in cordial agreement with them in several important particulars, if not in all the essential doctrines of a rational and liberal faith. They are less definite and positive in their religious ideas, less uncompromising and aggressive in asserting them, less severe, brusque, and courageous in manner and method of denominational action. They have had in the past more of what may be called culture, intellectual refinement, literary taste, though their superiority in this respect is gradually disappearing, but not more real 'strength of mind, power of

expression, or didactic skill. With marked tendencies to radicalism in theology of late, they yet in the past have been more conservative, cautious, non-committal, and more indisposed to offend the tastes or prejudices of people to whom they were theologically opposed. But this characteristic is now much less noticeable than formerly. They may be regarded as representing to date the more dignified, aristocratic element in the revolt of modern times against the errors and monstrosities of the partialistic systems of faith; the Universalists the more democratic. Unitarian preachers and expositors have spoken more to the studious, scholarly, erudite classes in the religious world; those of the Universalist denomination more to the rank and file—the plain, common people therein. Both found an appropriate and needful field in which to labor, both were well-equipped for their respective tasks, and both have wrought a most beneficent, excellent, and praiseworthy work. Both too have been abundantly prospered and blest in witnessing a rich harvest as the reward for their efforts,—in seeing the great doctrines and ideas for which they have separately and unitedly stood, not only commanding attention but making their way into all opposing parties and sects, modifying the creeds, ennobling the beliefs, and re-casting the teaching and the lives of Christian professors throughout Christendom—a consummation to the attainment of which they have each contributed in due and praiseworthy degree.

In contrast with the so-called Orthodox sects, it may be added that the Unitarians have never taken

on the assuming, offensive, denunciatory, sometimes coarse and abusive manners that have characterized certain of the clergy and evangelists of the opposition — especially in times of religious excitement and under given forms of emotional revivalism. They have perhaps erred in an opposite direction and to their own disadvantage. They have been too amiable, circumspect, unobtrusive, to be popular with the multitude, who prefer to be taken by storm and to be handled by smart drivers, or to secure that hearing and success among the more thoughtful and high-minded which the truthfulness and excellence of their message merited and required. In this respect they are improving and as a result are gaining a larger hearing and a larger recognition as a factor in the religious progress of the age, and a more rapid growth as a branch of the universal church of Christ. If we take the noblest specimens of saintliness and meritorious service whose names adorn and glorify their calendar, such as William Ellery Channing, Samuel J. May, and others of kindred spirit, clerical and lay, it is not too much to say that they have given the Christian world lessons by precept and example of the grandest type of moral and spiritual excellence, closely resembling those of the Master, the leaven of which will yet reach and permeate and vitalize the whole vast lump of humanity. If the denomination were a united, compact body of men and women like the persons named, well-equipped and marshalled for service under a wise and efficient leadership, it would go forth irresisti-

bly "conquering and to conquer," no power on earth being able to withstand its victorious march. But it is not so organized, equipped, and led, these very model men themselves perhaps, the great mass of members certainly, still clinging too tenaciously, or at least too exclusively, to a notion of liberty which is afraid of close affiliation, of organized activity, of ecclesiastical unity, lest thereby, their individual rights and prerogatives be suppressed, or at least jeopardized. So long as this condition of things exists, so long will the growth of the Unitarian body be slow, and the extension of its principles and doctrines, excellent as most of them are, be restricted and held to narrow boundaries.

Much in sympathy as I am with what may be deemed the essentials of the Unitarian faith, much as I admire and honor its ministry and lay members, speaking in a general way, and much as I appreciate and commend the service it has rendered to primitive and pure Christianity, I yet cannot yield it my unqualified and entire approbation and support. I am in no wise certain that, were all the world converted to Unitarianism, the kingdom of God would have come and the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven. Holding theoretically to the great ideas of the divine Fatherhood and of human Brotherhood, and letting no good opportunity slip without extolling them to the highest degree, the Unitarians as a rule seem to have no scruples regarding the maintenance and active support of habits, customs, and institutions, in social and civil life which set those ideas at naught or openly defy them; and although claiming

with persistent resolution to be Christians *par excellence*, yet so far as I know they neither seek nor propose a type of civilization radically higher and more Christlike than that now existing under which in certain marked respects the essential principles and spirit of Christianity are utterly ignored or ruthlessly trampled under foot. Hence I conclude that the Unitarian Church with all its excellences is not the church of the New Dispensation—the church that is to inaugurate the divine kingdom on the earth, and I therefore look for a higher, truer, better, more perfect one, established upon better promises, and possessing greater power of enlightening, uplifting, and redeeming mankind. Tried by the supreme test, I find the Unitarian Church wanting in some fundamental elements and requisites of a true church of Christ according to the primitive pattern. I remand it, therefore, with others I have examined, to a subordinate place in the providential economy of the world and in the work of establishing on the earth the long deferred reign of truth, love, righteousness, brotherhood, peace, and joy.

CONCLUSION.

And so ends my review of the more popular, notable, and significant churches or denominations of Christendom. In my somewhat protracted analysis and comparison of their respective platforms or bases of ecclesiastical organization and administration, it has been my main object to bring into view their distinguishing characteristics in respect to doctrine

and practice, in order that a just and satisfactory verdict might be rendered by the candid, fairminded reader upon their inherent merits, as well as upon the merits of my own system or scheme of ecclesiasticism as seen in connection with those which they represent. It has not been possible within the limits of time and space which I have assigned myself to notice at all a considerable number of small sects or religious bodies, however meritorious on the whole they may have been or are, pointing out and commenting on their excellences and defects; nor to consider critically the constitutional politics, the rules, regulations, ceremonials, and usages of those whose creeds or statements of belief have been made subjects of inquiry; nor yet to be as elaborate and thorough in what I have done as perhaps was desirable. But I have been able to show the sharp contrast which in many respects exists between the theology and ethics of many of the prevailing standards of faith and those of the one which I have outlined in the earlier discourses of this volume, as well as the agreement in other respects. Still I can but feel that the comparison has been incomplete and by no means all that I could have wished. But incomplete as it is, it must remain without further elucidation or maturation. If what I have written shall in some definite way suggest or shadow forth my deliberate conclusions touching the all-important themes discussed; if it shall awaken in any earnest, reverent mind inquiry touching those themes; if it shall stir any soul to the seeking after that higher and better life for the individual, for human society,

and for the world, which I have endeavored to indicate, commend, and promote, my cherished supreme aim in preparing this work will be consummated, and I shall be satisfied. And if, as I confidently believe, there shall arise at no far distant day a body of people sufficiently enlightened in regard to divine truth, sufficiently imbued with the spirit of Christ, sufficiently consecrated to the work of doing God's will, and sufficiently united in thought, in heart, and in purpose to institute a church on the basis I have set forth and recommended, they will have my suggestions, directions, formularies, and expositions to aid them in their endeavors. They can consider, select, reject, modify, or recast my system as their best judgment shall dictate and approve. So through them shall my labors in the Lord not have been in vain. And now in closing, I would invoke the inspiration, grace, and blessing of the Highest not only upon myself and upon these efforts of mine here brought to an end, but upon those who in the line of these efforts and by their aid shall in some coming day seek to upraise that regenerate church for which they are designedly preparative, and in which they shall find abundant justification, as I believe they will at the righteous bar of the infinite and ever-blessed God.

Almighty Maker of the countless spheres,
Father of Christ and all the holy seers,
How long must prayerful faith expectant wait
Thy promised kingdom in this mortal state?
When, through the true, the Christ-like Church renewed,
The race of man with love shall be imbued;—
When all on earth shall know and do thy will
As all in heaven thy perfect law fulfill.

